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POETRY
AND
ANNALS OF THE
STAGE

J. PAYNE COLLIER

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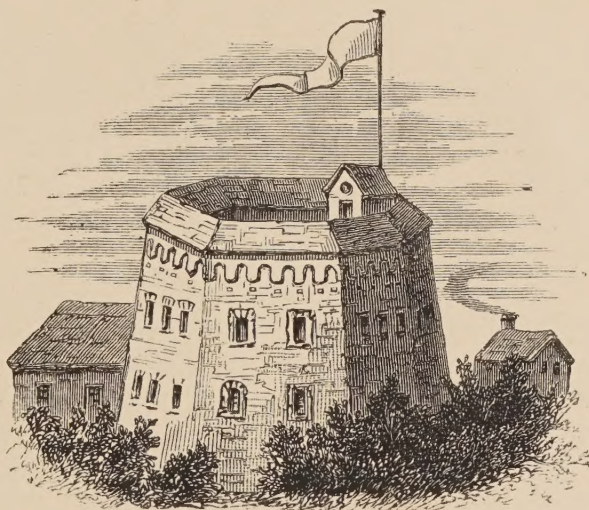


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THE HISTORY
OF
English Dramatic Poetry
TO THE TIME OF SHAKESPEARE :
AND
ANNALS OF THE STAGE
TO THE RESTORATION.

BY
J. PAYNE COLLIER, Esq., F.S.A.

A NEW EDITION.



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ANNALS OF THE STAGE,

FROM THE YEAR 1635 TO THE CLOSING OF THE THEATRES.

ON the 10th Jan. 1634-5, a Privy Seal was issued to Edmund Taverner, Esq., to enable him to receive a larger sum A. D. than we have yet seen paid at once on account of any 1635. Mask at Court: it was for 1400*l.* 'towards the charge of a mask, to be presented before his Majesty at Whitehall at Shrovetide next.'¹ Sir H. Herbert says nothing of this performance; his MS. (as far as Malone has quoted it)² for the year beginning Jan. 1st, 1634-5, being occupied chiefly with an account of the establishment of a company of French players in London.³

The unsuccessful 'attempt' of the French actors and ac-

¹ Chalmers obtained his knowledge of this fact from the MS. in the Lord Chamberlain's office, and not from the original Privy Seal, which we found among records in the Chapter-house (see *Apology*, p. 508): he states that this was the Mask of which Sir H. Herbert records the acting as the noblest of his time—the best poetry, best scenes, and the best habits. This is a mistake—Sir H. Herbert is speaking of the Mask of Shrovetide 1633-4, and not of Shrovetide 1634-5.

² *Shakespeare by Boswell*, iii, 120.

³ Under the date of 16th Feb. 1634-5, he notices, that he had committed a man of the name of Cromes, a broker in Long Lane, for lending to the players of Salisbury Court theatre an old church robe with *Jesus* upon it. He was released on the next day. Malone's *Shakespeare by Boswell*, iii, 237.

tresses, in 1629, seems for some years to have deterred others from the trial of a similar experiment; but early in the spring of 1635, a company of performers came over from France under the especial patronage of the Queen: they played before her in private on the 15th Feb.; and being 'commended by her Majesty to the King', they performed in the Cockpit at Whitehall on the 17th Feb., a French comedy, to which Sir H. Herbert gives the name of *Melise*, 'with good approbation'. After mentioning these facts, he proceeds as follows:—

'This day being Friday, and the 20th. of the same month (February), the King told me his pleasure, and commanded me to give order, that this French company should play the two sermon days in the week, during their time of playing in Lent, and in the House of Drury Lane, where the Queen's players usually play. The King's pleasure I signified to Mr. Beeston the same day, who obeyed readily.'

It is here to be remarked, that this order produced no immediate injury to the Queen's English players, of whom Beeston was the leader, because no English company was allowed to play upon the sermon-days in Lent. Sir H. Herbert adds, what shews that the hostility to French performers in 1629 was not revived in 1635, possibly, because there were no actresses among them—'they had (he says) the benefit of playing on the sermon-days, and got two hundred pounds at least, besides many rich clothes that were given them.' Although he is not distinct upon the point, he is probably speaking of the profits of the French company during the whole period of Lent, including Passion-week, which he says 'they had freely to themselves', and which extraordinary advantage he obtained from the King for them. He farther registers that he did 'the French' all these courtesies *gratis*,

although offered 10*l.*, because 'he wished to render the Queen, his mistress, an acceptable service'.

On the arrival of Easter, the French company was under the necessity of relinquishing the Cockpit theatre to A. D. Beeston, and the rest of the Queen's English players, 1635. but they performed at Court on Easter Monday, 4th April, when they presented the *Trompeur Puni* (as Sir H. Herbert expresses it), 'with better approbation than the other,' meaning, most likely, the comedy of *Melise*, which they had acted on the 17th February preceding. On Wednesday night, the 16th April, 'the French played *Alcimedor* with good approbation'.¹

With so much spirit was this undertaking conducted, that in considerably less than a month after this date, a new theatre had been prepared expressly for the French performers: it was in Drury-lane, and on the 5th of May 1635, a warrant was granted to Josias D'Aunay, and Hurfriis de Lau (so Sir H. Herbert spells their names) and others, empowering them to act there during pleasure. By a subsequent item, it seems that the King had also consented to relinquish in their favour what was called 'the manage-house', a part of the riding-school, in order that it might be converted into a playhouse for the French company.² When they began, and

¹ 'On the 10th May 1635, a warrant was issued for 30*l.* unto Mons. Josias Floridor, for himself and the rest of the French players, for three plays acted by them at the Cockpit.'—Chalmers's *Apol.*, p. 508. This does not refer, probably, to the Cockpit in Drury Lane, where the French players had acted during Lent, but to the Cockpit at Whitehall, in which dramatic performances sometimes took place.

² It has no date, and is in these terms:—'The King was pleased to command my lord chamberlain to direct his warrant to Monsieur Le Fevure, to give him a power to contract with the Frenchmen for to build a playhouse in the Manage-house, w^{ch} was done accordingly by my advice and allowance.'

how long they continued to act there, is uncertain; but on the 21st December 1635, the Master of the Revels records, that the Pastoral of *Florimene* was played in Whitehall by the French Ladies who attended the Queen.¹

The French company, then under Floridor, again performed before the Court in December 1635, but the day is not mentioned.² The success of the renewed attempt by the French seems to have encouraged certain Spanish actors to visit this country: they were allowed to play before the King on the

Here again Sir H. Herbert is careful to note that 'These Frenchmen were commended unto me by the Queen, and have passed through my hands *gratis*.' As Malone has remarked, he nevertheless permitted them to 'give his deputy 3*l*. for his pains'.

In a MS. book, preserved in the Lord Chamberlain's office, is the following entry referring to this point: it is quoted by Chalmers in his *Apology*, p. 506.—'18 April 1635—His Majesty has commanded me to signify his royal pleasure that the French comedians (having agreed with Mons. le Febure) may erect a stage, scaffolds, and seats, and all other accommodations, which shall be convenient, and act and present interludes and stage-plays, at his house during his Majesty's pleasure, without any disturbance, hindrance, or interruption. And this shall be to them, and Mons. le Febure, and to all others a sufficient discharge,' etc.

¹ 'The Pastoral of *Florimene*, with the description of the scenes and interludes, as it was sent me by Mr. Inigo Jones, I allowed for the press this 14th December 1635. The Pastoral is in French, and 'tis the argument only, put into English, that I have allowed to be printed.'

'Le [La] Pastorale de *Florimene* fust représenté devant le Roy et la Royne, le Prince Charles, et le Prince Palatin, le 21 Decem. jour de St. Thomas, par les filles Françoisse de la Royne, et firent tres bien, dans la grande sale de Whitehall, aux depens de la Royne.'—MS. Herbert. *Shakespeare by Boswell*, iii, 122.

² For this fact, Malone quotes the MS. *Office-book* of the then Lord Chamberlain, the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery: a warrant was issued for 10*l*. 'to Josias Floridor, for himself and the rest of the French players, for a tragedy by them acted before his Majesty in Decr. last'.

23rd December 1635: the piece is not named, and we do not afterwards hear of their performances.¹

At this date the King was again considerably in debt to various companies of English players for representations before the Court. On the 24th May 1635, a warrant was issued to John Lowen 'and the rest of the King's players', for 250*l.* for twenty plays acted as long ago as between 13th May 1624, and 30th May 1626. On the 24th and 30th January 1634-5, similar warrants had been signed in favour of William Blagrave and the Children of the Revels, for two sums of 30*l.* each, which had been due since 1631. Five plays by 'the Prince's Comedians' in 1634, were paid for by warrant for 100*l.* to Joseph Moore, Andrew Kane, and Ellis Worth, on the 10th December 1635.

Sir Humphrey Mildmay, in his MS. *Diary*, notices by name three plays he had seen in the course of 1635, viz. Fletcher's *Elder Brother*, Shakespeare's *Moor of Venice*, and Shirley's *Lady of Pleasure*, which last he emphatically speaks of as a 'rare play'. He frequently enters having been to theatres, without inserting the titles of the pieces performed.²

At this date, in the *Register* of Sir H. Herbert, and in the

¹ The only evidence respecting the experiment of the Spanish company is derived from the same source: '10*l.* paid to John Navarro, for himself and the rest of the company of Spanish players, for a play presented before his Majesty Decr. 23^d 1635.'—Sir H. Herbert does not notice the Spanish players in his *Register*, and, probably, he obtained no money from them.

² The following are some of his entries:—

'1635.

'21 April.—After dinner to the Elder Brother at the bla. fryers.

'28 April.—This afternoone I spent att a playe with good company.

'6 May.—Att the bla. fryers, and a play this day called the *More of Venice*.

'25 Nov.—After dinner to a foolishe playe at the fryers.

MSS. preserved in the office of the Lord Chamberlain, we find mention only of the following companies in London, independent of the French and Spanish players, if, indeed, the latter obtained any settled place of performance, which is more than doubtful:—

1. The King's company, under Lowen and Taylor, playing, as formerly, at the Globe and at Blackfriars theatres.
2. The Queen's players, under Christopher Beeston, occupying the Cockpit in Drury Lane.¹

'27 Nov. —The afternoone I spent with the Dr. at a playe.

'8 Dec. —Dined with Rob. Dowgell, and went to the *La. of Pleasure*, and saw that rare playe.'

Shirley's *Lady of Pleasure* had been licensed by Sir Henry Herbert on the 15th Oct. 1635. Its popularity was deservedly great.

¹ In 1635, when *Hannibal and Scipio*, by Nabbes, was played by the Queen's servants, they consisted, among others, of the following performers, as appears by the list of characters and actors prefixed to that tragedy: some of the names are new. William Sherlock, John Sumner, George Stutfield, William Allen, Hugh Clerke, Robert Axen, Anthony Turner, Michael Bowyer, John Page, Ezekiel Fenn, Theophilus Bird, Richard Perkins. Among Glapthorne's *Poems*, 4to, 1639, is one which shows that Ezechiel Fenn had been an actor of female characters, and had then just begun to take those of men: it is entitled, 'For Ezechiel Fenn, at his first acting a man's part. Prologue'. A little earlier (about 1630), when Heywood's *Fair Maid of the West* was revived, Christopher Goad, William Robinson, and — Wilbraham belonged to the company. Theophilus Bird, in the list of persons before that play, is named Theophilus Bourne, showing that he was called either Bird or Bourne, as his father had been before him, who, in Henslowe's *Diary*, is constantly called 'William Bird, otherwise Borne'. Sir H. Herbert states (without date, but about 1637), that he 'disposed Perkins, Sumner, Sherlock, and Turner to Salisbury Court, and joined them with the best of that company'; probably to strengthen its then weakness. The Turner here mentioned was Anthony Turner, and not Henry Turner, who, in March 1639-40, had become the leader of the Queen's players, though he had not been included in the list in 1635.

3. The Prince's players, under Joseph Moore and Andrew Kane, playing at the Fortune in Golden Lane.

4. The Children of the Revels, under William Blagrave, are spoken of as a company distinct from that of the Queen, but the place of their performance is not stated : it was possibly the Red Bull in Smithfield.

5. The Salisbury Court company, so called in all the accounts, was then under the management of a person of the name of Richard Heton.¹

In the beginning of 1636, an increase was made in the salaries and allowances of the officers of the Revels, A. D.
as a compensation for additional duties. Those ad- 1636.
ditional duties began, as appears by documents remaining in the office of the Lord Chamberlain, in 1630, when the Master, the Clerk Comptroller, the Clerk, the Yeoman, and the Groom of the Revels were required to attend the Court from the 30th Oct. to the end of Shrovetide ; whereas, until then, they had only been called upon to be in readiness from the 30th Nov. to the end of Shrovetide : for this month, the Master was allowed 12*l.* (at the rate of 8*s.* per day), the Clerk Comptroller, Clerk, and Yeomen, 3*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* each, and the Groom 1*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, making in the whole an increase of 23*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* Orders for this purpose were given on the 25th of May 1636, and on the 13th Feb. 1636-7, with a retrospective operation to the year 1631 ; so that the different officers of the Revels were allowed their arrears.

The Royal Revels, at Shrovetide in this year, included plays at Court, and a Mask in the Middle Temple. Sir

¹ 'On the 8th Feb. 1636-7, Richard Heton had a warrant, for himself and the rest of the company of players at Salisbury Court, for three plays acted by them before his Majesty, in October and February 1635. Two at 20*l.* a-piece, being at Hampton Court ; the other at 10*l.*, being at St. James's.'—Chalmers's *Apology*, p. 509.

Henry Herbert mentions the following, among the plays in the spring :—The second part of *Arviragus and Philicia*, on 16th February ;—*The Silent Woman*, on the 18th February ;—*The Duke's Mistress*, on the 22nd February ;—*Love's Aftergame* (by the Salisbury Court players), on the 24th February ;—and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, on the 28th February. The first and second parts of *Arviragus and Philicia* were also acted before the King, Queen, Prince, and the Elector Palatine, on Easter Monday and Tuesday, the 18th and 19th April. The Masque in the Middle Temple was Davenant's¹ *Triumphs of the Prince d'Amour*, on the 23rd February, which the Queen and many ladies of her Court attended in the dresses of citizens: she sat on a scaffold with the rest.²

The plague, having broken out in London, was raging with

¹ It is known that Davenant succeeded Ben Jonson as Poet Laureate, on the death of the latter in August 1637 ; but for some cause, not stated, he did not obtain the pension until a year and a half had elapsed, and then with the omission of the clause granting the 'terse of Canary Wine'. The Privy Seal for Davenant's pension is in the Chapter-house, Westminster: it is dated 10th December 1638, and it gives to 'William Davenant, Gent.', 'one annuity or yearly pension of one hundred pounds, in consideration of service heretofore done, or hereafter to be done'. It says nothing about 'encouraging him to proceed in those *services of wit and pen*', which are mentioned in Ben Jonson's warrant on 6th March, 5 Car. I. Yet there is no reason to believe that Davenant was out of favour with the King and Court at this period: the contrary may be inferred from various circumstances.

² Sir H. Herbert gives the following particulars of this exhibition:—'On Wednesday, the 23rd Feb. 1635 [1635-6], the Prince d'Amours gave a Mask, for the Prince Elector and his brother, in the Middle Temple, when the Queen was pleased to grace the entertainment by putting off majesty to put on a citizen's habit, and to sit upon a scaffold on the right hand amongst her subjects. The Queen was attended, in the like habits, by the Marques of Hamilton, the Countess of Denbigh, the Countess of

so much violence in the spring of 1636, that it was found necessary to prevent 'dangerous assemblies of the people', by the 'suppression', for a time, of theatrical amusements. An order for this purpose, dated 10th of May, is extant in the registers of the Privy Council, which forbids the representation 'of stage-plays, interludes, shows, and spectacles, until farther order'. Sir Henry Herbert did not communicate this decision until the 12th of May, when he sent information of it to 'the four companies', whom he does not name in his office-book; but he, doubtless, meant the King's, Queen's, and Prince's players, and the actors at the Salisbury-court theatre. These seem to have been the principal associations of performers at the date to which we are now referring.

On an occasion of this kind it was usual for the companies to proceed to the provinces; and, besides the authority they possessed under their patents, and the commission of the Master of the Revels, it seems to have been sometimes thought necessary to obtain from the Lord Chamberlain what was termed 'a Player's Pass'. That which was granted to the King's company on 17th of May (within five days after the temporary closing of the theatres in the metropolis) is extant, in a MS., in the office of the Lord Chamberlain: hence we learn, that at this date the body consisted of eighteen performers; and as Taylor, Lowen, and Swanston, Holland, and the Lady Elizabeth Fielding. Mrs. Basse, the law-woman, led in this royal citizen and her company.

'The Earl of Holland, the Lord Goring, Mr. Percy, and Mr. Jermyn, were the men that attended. The Prince Elector sat in the midst, his brother Robert on the right hand of him, and the Prince D'Amours on the left.

'The Mask was very well performed in the dances, scenes, clothing, and music, and the Queen was pleased to tell me, at her going away, that she liked it very well. Henry Lawes and William Lawes (now first named) made the music. Mr. Corseilles made the scenes.'

who were, and continued to be the leaders, are not named in it, we may infer, perhaps, that they did not join in this expedition. It empowers William Pen, Thomas Hobbes, William Trigg, William Patrick, Richard Baxter, Alexander Gough, William Hart and Richard Hawley, 'together with ten more, or thereabouts, of their fellows,' to repair 'to all towns corporate, market towns, and other where they shall think fit', to act their 'plays, comedies, and interludes' in any 'common halls, moot-halls, school-houses, or other convenient rooms'. It also appears by the same instrument, that they had been ordered to attend the King in his summer progress,¹ when he and the Queen visited Oxford, and saw Cartwright's play of *The Royal Slave* presented by the students of Christchurch: this performance took place on the 30th of August 1636, and gave the highest satisfaction.

One of the cities to which the company of players proceeded was Canterbury; and in the State Paper Office is preserved the copy of a letter on the subject of their performances, which appear to have given offence: at all events, the Mayor had written to the Privy Council on the subject, and the following was the reply:—

'After our hearty commendations. By your letter of the 25th of this month sent unto our very good Lord, the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury his Grace, we understand with what respect you proceeded with the Players that lately came to that city, in regard of his Majesty's Commission which they carried; and we likewise take notice not only of the disorders occasioned by their playing at so unseasonable a time in the night, but also of their insolent behaviour to yourself, for which they deserve punishment, and shall smart when they be met withal: to which purpose we pray you to advertise the names of some of the chiefest of their company that further enquiry

¹ Malone's *Shakespeare by Boswell*, iii, 166.

may be here made after them. And as we cannot but commend the great care you have expressed in the good and orderly government of that city, so we must let you know, for your encouragement, that his Majesty being by this time made acquainted with your carriage in this particular hath commanded us to give you notice of his gracious acceptance thereof. And for the future, if any stage-players shall come to play in your city in the time of Lent, you are not to give way unto it without the special privity of his Grace of Canterbury. And so we bid you farewell. Dated at Whitehall the 29th March 1636. Signed,

'LO. KEEPER.	LO. NEWBURGH.
'LO. A. BP. OF YORK.	MR. COMP ^R .
'LO. TRE'R.	MR. SEC. COKE.
'LO. P. SEALE.	MR. SEC. WINDEBANK.'

Thomas Heywood was the author of a Mask presented at rather an unusual season this year: on what day it was first performed is not stated, but it was repeated three times within eight days (as is stated on the title-page), and for the second time on the King's birthday, 19th November 1636, when he was entertained by the Queen at Denmark-house. It was called *Love's Mistress*, and was so much liked, and excited such public attention, that it was subsequently represented with great applause by the Queen's comedians at the Cockpit in Drury Lane.

The restraint of players in consequence of the plague was not taken off until the 23rd of February 1636-7: the King, however, kept his Christmas at Hampton Court, and summoned his own players, and others, to attend his service. The King's company was, therefore, obliged, early in December, to return to the vicinity of London, without the liberty of exercising their quality there, and consequently without the means of maintaining themselves. This circumstance was taken into consideration by the King, and on the 10th of

December 1636, a Privy Seal was issued, authorising the payment from the Exchequer to Lowen and Taylor of an allowance of 20*l.* a-week, in behalf of themselves and their theatrical associates.¹

This instance of the royal bounty brings us to the dramatic performances at Hampton Court during Christmas 1636-7, A. D. the most remarkable of which was the repetition, on 1637. the 12th of January, of Cartwright's *Royal Slave*, which the King and Queen had, however, seen in the summer at Oxford, when it was represented by the students of Christ Church. It appears by the printed copy of the play, that when it was repeated at Hampton Court, it was acted by the King's servants ; and there can be little doubt that the royal audience was well pleased with their exertions, because they obtained an extraordinary reward of 30*l.* in consideration, partly, of its being a new play, which they had had to learn for the occasion.² In the whole they received 240*l.* for their

¹ The following is a copy of this unusual document, from the original in the Chapter-house, Westminster :—

'BY THE KING.—Right trustie and welbeloved Cousin, etc. To the Treasurer and Under Treasurer of our Exchequer, etc. Whereas we have commanded our Servants, the Players, to assemble their company and keepe themselves together neere our Court for our service, and are graciously pleased to give them an allowance of Twenty Pounds by the weeke, our will and pleasure is, and we do hereby will and commaund you to pay, or cause to be payd, unto John Lowen and Joseph Taylor or their assignes, in the behalf of their company, the some of Twenty Pounds by the weeke, the same to commence from the first day of November last past, and to contynue during our pleasure, to be taken unto them as of our princely bountie, without accompt, imprest, or other charge to be sett upon them for the same or any part thereof. And these our letters, etc. Given under our Signet, at our Honor of Hampton Court, the Tenth day of December in the Twelveth yeare of our Raigne.

'FRA. GALLE.'

² The *Biographia Dramatica* states (*vide Royal Slave*) that the Queen

exertions at this season, when they performed twenty-two pieces.¹ Sir H. Herbert states, that the King gave Cartwright 40*l.* as his reward; so that he attended at Hampton Court, on the 12th of January, to take care that his *Royal Slave* was properly got up, and understood by the King's players.

Besides the royal theatrical servants, a company performed, whom Sir H. Herbert calls 'Beeston's boys', an expression which he afterwards explains by adding (though Malone has not given the precise date of the entry in the MS.) that 'Mr. Beeston was commanded to make a company of boys, and began to play at the Cockpit with them the same day'. These were, doubtless, the juvenile performers who exhibited before the King and Queen at Hampton Court, at Christmas 1636-7, and who, perhaps, in the MS. office-book in the department of the Lord Chamberlain, are called, on the 10th of May 1637, 'the New Company.'²

We are to understand, therefore, that at this date Christopher Beeston separated himself from the Queen's players, at whose was mainly instrumental in the repetition of the play at Hampton Court. This may be true; but it is not true (as it adds) that it was performed by 'her own servants', and that the comparison was in favour of the students of Oxford. It was performed by the King's players, and if it did not please as well at Hampton Court, as it had done at Oxford, it was probably because the zest of novelty was lost.

¹ '15 March 1636-7. A warrant for 240*l.* unto his Majesty's players—viz., 210*l.* for twenty-one plays acted by them, at 10*l.* a play; and 30*l.* more for a new play called *The Royal Slave*.'

² '10th May 1637. A warrant for the payment of 150*l.* unto Mr. Christopher Beeston, for plays acted by the Queen's servants—viz., Four at Hampton Court, at 20*l.* per play, in 1635; Five at Whitehall in the same year, and two plays acted by the New Company.'

The 'two plays acted by the New Company' were performed in January 1636-7, as appears by Sir H. Herbert's *Register*, although the date is not here specified.

head he had been for some years, in order to undertake the charge and instruction of an independent company of juvenile performers, hereafter called 'the King's and Queen's young company'. A person of the name of Henry Turner became the leader of the Queen's players, on the resignation of Beeston.

The pieces mentioned by Sir Henry Herbert as having been performed at Christmas and Shrovetide 1636-7, were the following :—

The first part of *Arviragus*, on the 26th Dec.—The second part of *Arviragus*, on the 27th Dec.—*Love and Honour*, on 1st Jan., Sunday.—*The Elder Brother*, on 5th Jan.—*King and no King*, on 10th Jan.—*The Royal Slave*, on the 12th Jan.—*Rollo*, on the 24th Jan.—*Julius Cæsar*, on the 31st Jan.—*Cupid's Revenge*, by Beeston's boys on the 7th Feb.—*A Wife for a Month*, by the King's players, on the 9th Feb.—*Wit without Money*, by Beeston's players, on the 14th Feb.—*The Governor*, by the King's players, on the 17th Feb.—*Philaster*, by the King's players, on Shrove Tuesday, the 21st February.

This list comprises only thirteen representations, whereas we know from an authority already quoted, that the King's company alone, received payment in March 1636-7, for twenty-two plays. Possibly, although not so expressed, this was the total number they had acted before the Court in the course of the preceding year. The Master of the Revels, by some accident, omits to notice the performance of Davenant's *Britannia Triumphans*, 'on the Sunday after twelfth night', as is stated on the title-page of that production. It was exhibited in a temporary banqueting room of timber, built by Inigo Jones, 'by reason the room where they were formerly presented, having the ceiling since richly adorned with pieces of painting of great value, figuring the acts of King James of

happy memory,¹ which it was feared would be injured by 'the smoke of so many lights'. The King was a performer in this Mask, with the Duke of Lennox, the Earls of Devonshire, Carlisle,¹ etc.

It has been observed that the prohibition of stage-plays, etc., in consequence of the plague, was recalled on A. D. the 24th of February 1636-7, as the deaths in London 1637. and its vicinity were then only forty-four in the week. This permission only lasted for a few days; for on the first of March the order of suppression was revived, and 'playes, dancing on the ropes, etc.' (as the entry in the *Privy Council Register* is worded), were no longer allowed until the renewed virulence of the malady had abated. It appears on the same authority, that obedience was not paid to the order by the parties concerned in the Cockpit theatre in Drury Lane, and on the 12th of May 1637,¹ a warrant was issued to Jasper Heyley, Messenger, 'to fetch before the Lords [of the Privy Council]

¹ *Britannia Triumphans* has been considered one of the rarest of the Court Masques in this reign, and two copies in Mr. Bindley's sale produced between 8*l.* and 9*l.* each. It is, however, by no means so scarce as has been represented, nor is there sufficient ground for the notion, that it was suppressed because it was represented on the Sabbath day. We only introduce the following lines from it, to show the origin of an often-repeated, and supposed anonymous, description of a giant fishing:—

'This day (a day as fair as heart could wish)
This giant stood on shore of sea to fish:
For angling rod he took a sturdy oak,
For line a cable that in storm ne'er broke:
His hook was such that heads the end of pole
To pluck down house ere fire consumes it whole;
His hook was baited with a dragon's tail,
And then on rock he stood to bob for whale.'

This was first stolen (no very valuable theft) by the anonymous author of the burlesque *Hero and Leander*, 1653, 8vo.

Christopher and William Beeston,¹ Theophilus Bird, Ezechiel Fenn, and Michael Moone,² with a clause to command the keepers of the playhouse called the Cockpit in Drury Lane, who either live in it, or have relation to it, not to permit plays to be acted there till further order.' Sir H. Herbert mentions nothing of this incident, nor do we know what punishment was inflicted upon the offenders, but they were most likely discharged, after a short imprisonment, on an undertaking not again to infringe the direction of the Privy Council. The order continued in force for seven months, permission to act not having been again given until the 2nd of October 1637.

The MS. in the office of the Lord Chamberlain; under date of the 10th of June 1637, contains an instrument, for which we have hitherto seen no precedent—against the printing of plays, to the prejudice of the companies to whom they belonged, and by whom they had been bought from the authors. During the suspension of the stage in consequence of the number of deaths by the plague, in order to gratify the theatrical avidity of the public, certain printers, who had sur-

¹ William Beeston seems afterwards to have acquired considerable reputation, and to have become of sufficient importance to induce Francis Kirkham to dedicate to him his romance, translated from the French, called *The Loves and Adventures of Clerio and Lozia*, 1652. The opening of the dedication is this:—

'Divers times in my hearing, to the admiration of the whole company, you have most judiciously discoursed of Poesie: which is the cause I presume to chuse you for my patron and protector, who are the happiest interpreter and judge of our English stage plays this nation ever produced; which the poets and actors of these times cannot (without ingratitude) deny; for I have heard the chief and most ingenious acknowledge their fames and profits essentially sprung from your instruction, judgment, and fancy.'

² This is the first notice of a young actor who obtained great distinction after the Restoration, and who, during the civil wars, bore a commission in the King's service as Major Mohun. He acted until 1685.

reptitiously got manuscript plays into their hands, began to print and publish them. Complaints against them had been before made, and on this occasion the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, Lord Chamberlain, addressed a letter to the Stationers' Company, directing that body to interfere to prevent the infringement of the rights of the King's Servants under Lowen and Taylor, and of the King's and Queen's young companies under Christopher Beeston. It was required, that no play should be printed without the certificate of the leaders of those companies; and the order, construed strictly, would prevent the publication of any plays, belonging to any other associations of actors, without the certificate of Lowen and Taylor, or of Beeston.¹

From the 2nd Oct. 1637, when the restraint from playing

¹ The letter from the Lord Chamberlain runs thus (Chalmers' *Apol.*, p. 513):—'After my hearty commendations. Whereas complaint was heretofore presented to my dear brother and predecessor by his Majesty's servants the players, that some of the company of Printers and Stationers had procured and printed divers of their books of Comedies, Tragedies, Interludes, Histories and the like, which they had for the special service of his Majesty, and their own use, bought and provided at very dear and high rates: By means whereof, not only they themselves had much prejudice, but the books much corruption, to the injury and disgrace of the authors; and thereupon the Master and Wardens of the company of Printers and Stationers were advised by my brother to take notice thereof, and to take order for the stay of any further impression of any of the Plays or Interludes of his Majesty's servants without their consents; which being a caution given with such respect, and grounded on such weighty reasons, both for his Majesty's service, and the particular interest of the players, and so agreeable to common justice, and that indifferent measure which every man would look for in his own particular, it might have been presumed, that there would have needed no farther order or direction in the business: Notwithstanding which, I am informed that some copies of plays belonging to the King's and Queen's servants, the players, and purchased by them at dear rates, having been lately stolen, or gotten from them by indirect means, are

was taken off, to the 2nd June 1638, the Register of Sir Henry Herbert is destitute of all information regarding the stage: nevertheless, the performances at Court recommenced on the 30th September 1637, and continued until the 3rd February 1637-8; and in that period the King's actors, under Lowen, Taylor, and Swanston, played fourteen pieces before the King, while the Prince's servants were called upon to contribute their exertions upon three occasions in November and December 1637.¹ We have no means of supplying the titles of any of the plays performed.

now attempted to be printed, and that some of them are at your press and ready to be printed: which, if it should be suffered, would directly tend to their apparent detriment and great prejudice, and to the disabling them to do their Majesties service. For prevention and redress whereof it is desired, that order be given and entered by the Master and Wardens of the Company of Printers and Stationers, that if any plays be already entered, or shall hereafter be brought into the hall to be entered for printing, that notice thereof shall be given to the King's and Queen's servants, the players, and an enquiry made of them to whom they do belong, and that none be suffered to be printed, until the assent of their Majesties said servants be made appear to the Master and Wardens of the Company of Printers and Stationers by some certificate in writing, under the hands of John Lowen and Joseph Taylor for the King's servants, and of Christopher Beeston for the King's and Queen's young company, or of such other persons as shall from time to time have direction of those companies; which is a course that can be hurtful unto none, but such as go about unjustly to avail themselves of other's goods without respect of order or good government: which I [am] confident you will be careful to avoid, and therefore I commend it to your special care; and if you shall have need of any further authority or power, either from his Majesty or the Council Table, the better to enable you in the execution thereof, upon notice given to me, either by yourselves or by the players, I will endeavour to apply that further remedy thereto which shall be requisite. And so etc. Dated the 10th June 1637. P[embroke] and M[ontgomery].

'To the Master and Wardens of the Company of Printers and Stationers.'

¹ The MS. in the Lord Chamberlain's Office, so often cited in these *Annals*, includes the following particulars relative to these seventeen

Two Masks were presented at Christmas and Shrovetide, 1637-8, which appear to have been as costly as usual. A. D. For the first, which was called the King's Mask, 1638. Edmund Taverner, Esq., had a warrant, on Dec. 1, 1637, for 1400*l.*, 'to be employed towards the charge of our Mask, to be presented at our Court at Whitehall on Twelfth-night next': on the 13th Dec., a warrant under Privy Seal was also issued to George Kirke, Esq., Gentleman of the Robes, for 150*l.*, 'for providing masking apparel for our own person'. The warrant for the Queen's Mask at Shrovetide was also for 1400*l.*, and it was issued to Michael Oldisworth, Esq. The original documents were in the Chapter-house, Westminster.

It is of course dangerous to attempt to form general conclusions from insulated facts: were it at all safe to do so, we might infer, that in the spring of 1637-8, the theatres were well attended, for in the *Diary* of Sir H. Mildmay the subsequent entry is found:—'3 Feb. 1637-8 came home dirty and weary, the playe being full.'—Under date of 26th Oct. 1638, he registers in his account-book that he saw '*The Foxe* playe, with Fra. Wortley', and it cost him, on that occasion, the extraordinary sum of 4*s.* 6*d.* This was probably at the Globe, as Ben Jonson's *Fox* belonged to the King's company. In the winter, Sir H. Mildmay usually visited the Blackfriars or Cockpit, and it was no doubt one of those two

performances:—'15 March, 1637-8. A warrant for 150*l.* to John Lowen, Joseph Taylor, and Elliard Swanston, or any of them, for themselves and the rest of the company of his Majesty's players, for 14 plays acted before his Majesty, between the 30th Sept. and the 3rd Feb. following, 1637-8; one whereof was at Hampton-court, for which 20*l.* is allowed; the rest at the usual rate of 10*l.* a play. 21 March 1637-8. A warrant for 40*l.* unto Joseph Moore, for himself and the rest of the Prince's players, for 3 plays acted before his Highness, etc. in Nov. and Dec. last: one whereof was at Richmond, for which was allowed 20*l.*, in consideration of their travel and remove of goods.'

houses that he found full in the February preceding, when, though 'dirty and weary', he wished to recreate himself at the theatre.

King Charles seems to have taken a minute and peculiar interest in all matters that related to the drama. In 1633 he had interfered in order to prevent the Master of the Revels from expunging from Davenant's *Wits* all expressions of force and character, in the nature of asseverations, which Sir H. Herbert considered oaths; and two years afterwards, at the request of Sir H. Herbert, he interested himself in the filling up of one of the minor appointments in the department of the Revels.¹

Under the date of June, 1638, and in connexion with a play by Massinger now lost, first called *The King and the*

¹ This trait in the King's character is given by Sir Henry Herbert in the following words.—'The same day (22d Feb. 1635) at Whitehall, I acquainted King Charles, my master, with the danger of Mr. Hunt's sickness, and moved his Majesty, in case he died, that he would be pleased to give me leave to commend a fit man to succeed him in his place of Yeoman of the Revels. The King told me, that till then he knew not that Will Hunt held a place in the Revels. To my request he was pleased to give me this answer: Well, says the King, I will not dispose of it, or it shall not be disposed of 'till I hear you. *Ipsissimis verbis*; which I enter here as full of grace, and for my better remembrance, since my master's custom affords not so many words, nor so significant.'

It may be added, that probably the illness of Hunt was protracted, because it does not seem that the vacancy, above contemplated, occurred until 1639. On the 21st October of that year, Joseph Taylor, who had been so long one of the leaders of the King's players, was appointed 'Yeoman of the Revels to his Majesty in ordinary, in the place of William Hunt, deceased.' The salary was *6d. per diem*, payable quarterly, together with such other fees and emoluments as William Hunt, or his predecessors, had enjoyed. *Vide* Chalmers' *Apol.* p. 503; where the MS. in the Lord Chamberlain's office is quoted respecting this not very important matter.

Subject, and afterwards (as Malone supposes¹) *The Tyrant*, Sir Henry Herbert's Register presents us with an incident that is rather to be looked upon as a point of general history, than belonging only and peculiarly to the stage. The King's difficulties to raise supplies, by ship-money, and afterwards from the clergy, are well known ; and it seems that a play by Massinger, the scene of which was laid in Spain, having been sent to the Master of the Revels for allowance, containing passages objectionable on account of the spirit and temper of the time, it found its way, intermediately perhaps, into the King's own hands : what occurred regarding it, is thus related by Sir H. Herbert.

'Received of Mr. Lowens, for my pains about Messinger's play, called *The King and the Subject*, 2nd June, 1638, 1*l*.

'The name of *The King and the Subject* is altered, and I allowed the play to be acted—the reformatiōns most strictly observed, and not otherwise ; the 5th of June 1638.

'At Greenwich, the 4th of June, Mr. W. Murray gave me power from the King to allow of the play, and told me that he would warrant it.

'Monies? We'll raise supplies what ways we please,
And force you to subscribe to blanks, in which
We'll mulct you as we shall think fit. The Cæsars
In Rome were wise, acknowledging no laws
But what their swords did ratify ; the wives
And daughters of the Senators bowing to
Their wills as deities,' etc.

'This is a piece taken out of Philip Massinger's play, called *The King and the Subject*, and entered here for ever to be remembered by my son, and those that cast their eyes upon it, in honour of King Charles, my master, who, reading over the play at Newmarket, set

¹ *Shakespeare by Boswell*, iii, 230.

his mark upon the place with his own hand, and in these words—
 “This is too insolent, and to be changed.”

‘Note, that the poet makes it the speech of a King, Don Pedro, King of Spain, and spoken to his subjects.’

In the course of this year, but at what particular dates is not specified, the King’s players acted twenty-four times before the Court, six times at Hampton Court and Richmond, and eighteen times at Whitehall. As for the first, 20*l.* per play, and for the last, 10*l.* per play, were allowed; the total sum due was 300*l.*; and for this a warrant was made out on the 12th of March 1638-9, and given to Taylor, Lowen and Swanston, for themselves and the rest of the company.¹ Sir H. Herbert furnishes no information, either regarding these representations or any others, public or private, between the 5th of June 1638, and the 9th of April 1640. In consequence of the death of Sir John Ashley he became Master of the Revels in his own right, and by virtue of the reversion which he had secured.²

The transactions connected with the stage during this interval were, however, more than usually interesting. On the 26th of March 1638-9, Davenant (to whom, in the December A. D. preceding, had been granted the annuity of 100*l.* 1639. formerly given to Ben Jonson as Poet Laureate) obtained letters patent under the Great Seal for the erection of a new theatre within the boundary of the City of London, upon a piece of ground described as lying at the back of the Three Kings’ Ordinary in Fleet-street, in the parish of St.

¹ MS. in the Lord Chamberlain’s Office.

² In consequence of ill health, on the 20th of March, 1637-8, Sir J. Ashley (called Astley in the Privy Seal in the Chapter House) obtained a licence to reside in London, ‘or where he pleases, whether at Christmas or at other times’, contrary to a former order, directing that the nobility and gentry, who had mansion-houses in the country, should repair to them ‘to keep hospitality meet for their degrees’.

Dunstan's in the West, or in the parish of St. Bride's, or on 'any other ground in or about that place'. This playhouse was to have been 120 feet square, and consequently would have been the largest in the metropolis or its neighbourhood.¹ As we shall see hereafter, this project was never carried into execution, and Davenant was obliged to relinquish the privilege he had obtained.

No fewer than thirty-one plays were acted at Court between June 1638 and April 1640. Of these, seven were by the Queen's players under Henry Turner, for which they received 80*l.*; one-and-twenty by the King's players under Lowen, Taylor and Swanston, for which they received 230*l.*; and three by the Prince's players, under Moore and Cane, for which they received 60*l.* The pieces performed at Richmond were, as formerly, paid for at the rate of 20*l.* each, and the pieces at Whitehall at the rate of 10*l.* each.²

Masks were also presented at Twelfthtide and Shrovetide. On the 3rd of January 1639-40, a warrant was issued to Michael Oldisworth for 1400*l.* towards 'defraying the charge of the scene, masking habits, and other expenses of the mask, to be presented by us, and our dearest consort the Queen, at Twelfthtide next.' The King's dress for the mask at Shrovetide cost 120*l.*, as appears by a warrant for that sum to George Kirke, Gent. of the Robes, 'for masking apparel for our own wearing'. This Privy Seal is dated 17th of January 1639-40; but there is no account extant of the cost of any other part of the preparations.

Christopher Beeston continued but for a short time at the head of 'the King's and Queen's young company', for, in

¹ The Fortune, which was then the largest theatre, was only eighty feet square, before it was burnt in 1621.

² These details were derived by Chalmers (*Apol.* p. 511) from the MS. in the office of the Lord Chamberlain.

August 1639, he had been succeeded by William Beeston (perhaps his brother), who was then extremely anxious to secure to himself, and to the juvenile players under him, the sole right of performing a certain number of plays, most of which had belonged to the Queen's players while they continued at the Cockpit. William Beeston, on succeeding to the theatre, succeeded to the plays also; but he seems to have feared, that, as the Queen's players no longer acted at the Cockpit, his claim might be disputed. He therefore appears to have had sufficient interest with the Lord Chamberlain to induce him to put forth an order, commanding 'all governors and masters of play-houses' to refrain from acting all and any of the plays he enumerated.¹

¹ The list is valuable, and the document itself, if only on account of its novelty, is worth subjoining. It is from the original MS. in the Lord Chamberlain's office:—

'Whereas William Bieston, Gent. Governor, etc. of the King's and Queen's young Company of Players at the Cockpit in Drury Lane, hath represented unto his Majesty, that the several plays hereafter mentioned (viz.) *Witt without Money*; *The Night Walkers*; *The Knight of the burning Pestill*; *Father's owne Sonne*; *Cupid's Revenge*; *The Bondman*; *The Renegado*; *A New way to pay Debts*; *The Great Duke of Florence*; *the Maid of Honor*; *The Traytor*; *The Example*; *The Young Admirall*; *The Oportunity*; *A Witty fayre one*; *Love's Cruelty*; *The Wedding*; *The Maid's Revenge*; *The Lady of Pledsure*; *The Schoole of Complement*; *The Grateful Servant*; *The Coronation*; *Hide Parke*; *Philip Chabot Admiral of France*; *A Mad Couple well mett*; *All's loss by Lust*; *The Changeling*; *A fayre Quarrell*; *The Spanish Gypsie*; *The World*; *The Sunne's Darling*; *Love's Sacrifice*; *'Tis Pitty shée's a Whore*; *George a greene*; *Love's Mistress*; *The Cunning Lovers*; *The Rape of Lucrese*; *A Trick to cheat the Devill*; *A Foole and her Maydenhead soon parted*; *King John and Matilda*; *A Citty Night Cap*; *The Bloody Banquett*; *Cupid's Vagaries*; *The Conceited Duke*; and *Appius and Virginia*, do all and every of them properly and of right belong to the said house, and consequently that they are all in his propriety. And to the end that any other company of actors, in or about

About the year 1635, the Prince's players, who had been stationed at the Salisbury Court theatre soon after 1629, were performing at the Fortune in Golding Lane; but, prior to September 1639, they were playing at the Red Bull in St. John Street, Smithfield: the cause of these changes is unknown.¹ On the 29th of the month above-mentioned, representations were made against them to the Privy Council, in

London, shall not presume to act any of them to the prejudice of him the said William Bieston and his company—his Majesty hath signified his royal pleasure unto me, thereby requiring me to declare so much to all other companies of actors hereby concernable, that they are not any ways to intermeddle with, or act any of the above-mentioned plays. Whereof I require all masters and governors of playhouses, and all others whom it may concern to take notice, and to forbear to impeach the said William Bieston in the premises, as they tender his Majesty's displeasure and will answer the contempt.

'Dated 10th August, 1639.'

¹ They were not of long continuance, for Sir H. Herbert tells us, that at Easter 1640, the Prince's company returned to the Fortune, and 'the Fortune company' went to the Red Bull. He does not state of what players the Fortune company at that time consisted, but they were probably the Queen's servants, who had been under Christopher Beeston, until he became Governor of the King's and Queen's young company. See Malone's *Shakespeare by Boswell*, iii, 241. On p. 79 of the same volume, Malone has quoted, for a different purpose, the following prologue by J. Tatham, 'upon the removing of the late Fortune players to the Bull', from his volume called *Fancies Theatre*, 1640:—

'Here, gentlemen, our anchor's fixed; and we,
Disdaining Fortune's mutability,
Expect your kind acceptance: then we'll sing
(Protected by your smiles, our ever spring)
As pleasant as if we had still possess
Our lawful portion out of Fortune's breast.
Only, we would request you to forbear
Your wonted custom, banding tile and pear
Against our curtains to allure us forth.
I pray take notice, these are of more worth—

consequence of their having brought out a piece called *The Whore New Vamped*, in which personal allusion was made to an alderman of London, who had been a blacksmith in Holborn, and some general abuse thrown upon proctors. The State Paper Office contains a singular document upon this subject, in which the objectionable parts of the play are pointed out; but, from the statement there made, it seems very doubtful whether the author (whoever he might be) or the Master of the Revels, were at all to blame: the expressions against which complaint was made appear rather to have been foisted in by Andrew Cane, the actor, whose name has been before met with in connection with the company called the Prince's players. The commencement of the document in the State Paper Office is considerably damaged, and some words are obliterated; but, as a copy of this portion of it is found in the Registers of the Privy Council, the deficiencies are accurately supplied in the transcript contained in the note below.¹ The play which thus attracted the attention of the King and of the Privy Council, has not survived.

In the Autumn of 1639, Davenant was obliged to relin-

Pure Naples silk, not worsted. We have ne'er
An actor here has mouth enough to tear
Language by the ears. This forlorn hope shall be
By us refin'd from such gross injury;
And then let your judicious loves advance
Us to our merits, them to their ignorance.'

Hence we see, that at the Red Bull they had, at this date, silk curtains, and probably the house was *then* better furnished, and more ornamented in other respects than the Fortune.

¹ 'Order touching the Players at the Red Bull. At the Court at Whitehall, 29th September 1639, present the King's most excellent Majesty. Whereas complaint was this day made to his Majesty, sitting in Council, that the stage players of the Red Bull have lately, for many days together, acted a scandalous and libellous play, wherein they have

quish the patent granted him in the spring of the same year, for building a theatre behind the Three Kings ordinary in Fleet street, or in that immediate neighbourhood: the original letters-patent are recited in an indenture by which Davenant consented not to erect any such building. Why the royal permission thus given was withdrawn remains unexplained.¹

audaciously reproached, and in a libellous manner traduced and personated, not only some of the Aldermen of the City of London, and other persons of quality, but also scandalized and defamed the whole profession of Proctors belonging to the Court of Civil Law, and reflected upon the present Government: it was ordered, that Mr. Attorney-General should be hereby prayed, and requested forthwith, to call before him, not only the poet that made the said play, and the actors that played the same, but also the person who licensed it, and having diligently examined the truth of the same complaint, to proceed roundly against such of them as he shall find to have been faulty; and to use such effectual expedition to bring them to sentence, as that their exemplary punishment may prevent such insolencies betimes.'

The ground of offence is stated to be the following:—In the play called *The Whore New Vamped*, where there was mention of the new duty upon wines: one that personates a justice of the peace says to Cane, 'Sirrah, I'll have you before the Alderman': whereto Cane replied in these words—viz., 'The Alderman! the Alderman is a base, drunken, sottish knave, I care not for the Alderman; I say the Alderman is a base, drunken, sottish knave': another said, 'How now, Sirrah; what Alderman do you speak of?' then Cane said, 'I mean Alderman, the blacksmith in Holborn': said the other, 'Was he not a vintner?' Cane answered, 'I know no other'.

In another part of the same play, Cane, speaking of projects and patents that he had gotten, among the rest said that he had a patent for twelve-pence a-piece upon every proctor and proctor's man that was not a knave:—said another, 'Was there ever known any proctor, but he was an errant knave?'

¹ Chalmers (*Suppl. Apol.*, p. 187) says, that the project was defeated 'on some disagreement with the Earl of Arundel, the landlord', but this fact nowhere appears, and it seems much more probable, that the growth of puritanical notions regarding the stage, and perhaps the interference

Between the 10th of November 1640, and the 22nd of February 1640-1, plays for the representation of which 160*l*. were paid to Lowen, Taylor and Swanston, were performed

of the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London, induced the King to withdraw his letters-patent. The following is the indenture by which Davenant yielded his right into the hands of the Crown:—

‘This Indenture made the second day of October, in the fifteenth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord Charles, by the grace of God of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, etc. Annoq. Dm. 1639. Between the said King’s most Excellent Maty of the first part, and William Davenant, of London, Gent., of the other part. Whereas the said King’s most excellent Maty, by his Highness Letters patents under the great Seal of England, bearing date the six and twentieth day of March last past before the date of these presents, did give and grant unto the said William Davenant, his Heirs, Executors, Administrators, and Assigns, full power, license, and authority that he they and every of them, by him and themselves, and by all and every such person or persons as he or they shall depute or appoint, and his and their labourers, servants, and workmen, shall and may lawfully, quietly, and peaceably frame, erect, new build, and set up upon a parcel of ground lying near unto or behind the three Kings Ordinary in Fleet Street, in the parish of St. Dunstan’s in the West, London, or in St. Bride’s, London, or in either of them, or in any other ground in or about that place, or in the whole street aforesaid, already allotted to him for that use, or in any other place that is or hereafter shall be assigned and allotted out to the said William Davenant by the Right Honorable Thomas Earl of Arundel and Surrey, Earl Marshal of England, or any other his Mat^s. Commissioners for building for the time being in that behalf, a Theatre or Playhouse with necessary tiring and retiring rooms, and other places convenient, containing in the whole forty yards square at the most, wherein plays, musical entertainments, scenes, or other the like presentments, may be presented by and under certain provisoes or conditions in the same contained, as in and by the said letters patents, whereunto relation being had more fully and at large, it doth and may appear: Now this Indenture witnesseth, and the said William Davenant doth by these presents declare his Majesty’s intent meaning, at and upon the granting of the said License, was and is, that he the said William Davenant, his Heirs, Executors, Administrators, nor Assigns, should not frame, build, or set

before the King, Queen, and Prince. It is to be specially observed that this is the latest extant warrant issued for such a purpose anterior to the civil wars, and it bears date on the 20th of March 1640-1.¹

N. Richard's Tragedy of *Messalina* was acted 'by the company of his Majesty's Revels', and printed 1640. To the list of characters are appended the names of the principal performers, viz.:—*Claudius Emp.*, Will. Cartwright, Sen.; *Silius*, Christ. Goud; *Saufellus*, John Robinson; *Manester*, Sam. Tomson; *Montanus*, Rich. Johnson; *Mela*, Will. Hall;

up the said Theatre or Playhouse in any place inconvenient, and that the said parcel of ground lying near unto or behind the Three Kings Ordinary in Fleet Street, in the said parish of St. Dunstan's in the West, London, or in St. Bride's, London, or in either of them or in any other ground in or about that place, or in the whole street aforesaid, and is sithence found inconvenient and unfit for that purpose: therefore the said William Davenant doth, for himself, his Heirs, Executors, Administrators, and Assigns, and every of them, covenant, promise, and agree to and with our said Sovereign Lord the King, his Heirs and Successors, that he the said William Davenant, his Heirs, Executors, Administrators, nor Assigns, shall not or will not, by virtue of the said License and Authority to him granted as aforesaid, frame, erect, new build, or set up upon the said parcel of ground in Fleet-street aforesaid, or in any other part of Fleet-street, a Theatre or Playhouse, nor will not frame, erect, new build, or set up upon any other parcel of ground lying in or near the Cities [q. liberties] or Suburbs of the Cities of London or Westminster, any Theatre or Playhouse, unless the said place shall be first approved and allowed by warrant under his Majesty's sign manual, or by writing under the hand and seal of the said Right Honourable Thomas Earl of Arundel and Surrey. In witness whereof to the one part of this Indenture the said William Davenant hath set his hand and seal, the day and yeare first above written.

'WILLIAM DAVENANT, L. S.'

'Signed sealed and delivered in the presence of

'EDW. PENRUDDOKS.

MICHAEL BAKER.'

¹ It is found in the MS. in the Lord Chamberlain's office, already so frequently referred to.

Messalina, John Barret; *Lepida*, Tho. Jordan; *Sylana*, Matthias Morris.

Jordan and Robinson have commendatory verses to the tragedy, together with Tho. Rawlins, Stephen Bradwell, Robert Davenport, and Thomas Combes, the last in Latin.

Although Sir H. Herbert renews his notices of the drama in his *Register* in the month of April 1640, he says nothing of the exhibitions by the King's company at Court. He informs us, that on the 9th of April 1640, the Lord Chamberlain 'bestowed a play upon the King and Queen, called *Cleodora, Queen of Arragon*, made by my cousin Abington' [Habington]; and he adds that 'it was performed by my Lord's servants out of his own family, and [at] his charge in the clothes and scenes, which were very rich and curious.' The representation was made in the hall at Whitehall, and 'the King and Queen (according to the Master of the Revels) commended the general entertainment, as very well acted and well set out'. He does not mention any praises bestowed upon the author; but the piece, on the whole, was so well liked, that 'it was acted a second time in the same place, before the King and Queen'. This second performance was probably by the regular players of the King, as *The Queen of Arragon* was subsequently exhibited with success at the Blackfriars theatre.¹

The King's and Queen's 'young company', under William Beeston, in May 1640, fell under the displeasure of the Court, for performing a play that had not received the licence of the Master of the Revels. Charles I projected a journey against

¹ It was printed in folio in 1640 under the title of *The Queen of Arragon*, and not *Cleodora, the Queen of Arragon*, as it is given by Sir H. Herbert. In the printed copy the heroine is throughout called 'the Queen.' It is accompanied by a prologue and epilogue 'at Court', and 'at the Friars.'

the Scots in March 1640, and he personally complained to Sir H. Herbert, that the piece, thus represented by 'Beeston's Boys' at the Cockpit, 'had relation to passages of the King's journey into the North,' and he commanded the Master of the Revels 'to punish the offenders'. On the 4th of May Beeston was arrested under a warrant from the Lord Chamberlain, and committed to the Marshalsea; and the company of which he was governor was at the same time commanded 'to forbear playing, for playing when they were forbidden' by Sir H. Herbert, 'and for other disobedience.' The offence, therefore, was that Sir H. Herbert, upon the King's complaint, had ordered the actors to discontinue their performances, with which they had refused to comply; but they were not treated with much severity, for, after lying still on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, they were permitted to recommence their performances on Thursday; and Sir H. Herbert tells us, with apparent satisfaction at the exercise and acknowledgment of his power, 'at my Lord Chamberlain's entreaty I gave them their liberty, and upon their petition of submission, subscribed by the players, I restored them to 'their liberty on Thursday.' We might infer from hence, that all the players had been arrested, as well as Beeston; the first expression, 'gave them their liberty,' meaning that he set them at large, and the repetition, 'restored them to their liberty,' meaning that he permitted them again to act.¹

¹ The following document from the MS. in the Lord Chamberlain's office refers to only part of this transaction: the warrant for the arrest of William Beeston on the day following its date, is not extant:—

'Whereas William Bieston, and the company of players of the Cockpit in Drury Lane, have lately acted a new play without any license from the Master of his Majesty's Revells; and being commanded to forbear playing or acting of the same play by the said Master of the Revells, and commanded likewise to forbear all manner of playing, have notwithstanding, in contempt of the authority of the said Master of the Revells, and the power granted unto him under the great seal of England, acted

This instance of insubordination was followed in the next month by the removal of William Beeston, a circumstance omitted to be recorded by Sir H. Herbert, but of which the evidence is indisputable: Davenant was appointed governor of the King's and Queen's company at the Cockpit in his stead, and in the outset of the instrument, the disorganization of the body, when under the charge of Beeston, is mentioned as the cause of the change.¹

Some time after this event, perhaps in 1641, but at what precise date cannot now be fixed, William Beeston applied to the Master of the Revels for his authority 'to continue the house, called Salisbury Court playhouse, in [as] a playhouse',

the said play and others, to the prejudice of his Majesty's service, and in contempt of the office of the Revels [whereby] he and they, and all other companies, ever have been and ought to be governed and regulated: These are therefore, in his Majesties name, and signification of his royal pleasure, to command the said William Bieston and the rest of that company of the Cockpit players, from henceforth and upon sight hereof, to forbear to act any plays whatsoever, until they shall be restored by the said Master of the Revells unto their former liberty. Whereof all parties concernable are to take notice, and conform accordingly, as they and every one of them will answer it at their peril. Dated the 3d of May 1640.

'To W^m. Bieston, George Estoteville, and the rest of the Company of Players at the Cockpit in Drury Lane.

¹ Malone (*Shakespeare by Boswell*, iii, 242) asserts that Davenant was appointed 'governor of the King's and Queen's company acting at the Cockpit' on the death of Christopher Beeston: it was, in fact, on the removal of William Beeston, as is established by the following document. 'Whereas in the playhouse or theatre, commonly called the Cockpit in Drury-lane, there are a company of players or actors authorized by me (as Lord Chamberlain to his Majesty) to play or act under the title of the King's and Queen's servants, and that by reason of some disorders, lately amongst them committed, they are disabled in their service and quality: These are therefore to signify, that by the same authority I do authorize and appoint William Davenant, Gent., one of her Majesty's

and obtained permission for the purpose; but, in consequence of the former disobedience of Beeston to his authority, Sir H. Herbert was most careful in his licence to assert and specify his various powers, as they regarded theatres and players.¹

The plague made its reappearance in the autumn of 1640,

servants, for me and in my name, to take into his government and care the said company of players, to govern, order, and dispose of them for action and presentments, and all their affairs in the said house, as in his discretion shall seem best to conduce to his Majesty's service in that quality. And I do hereby enjoin and command them, all and every of them, that are so authorized to play in the said house under the privilege of his or her Majesty's servants, and every one belonging, as prentices or servants, to those actors to play under the said privilege, that they obey the said Mr. Davenant and follow his orders and directions as they will answer the contrary: which power or privilege he is to continue and enjoy during that lease which Mrs. Elizabeth Bieston, *alias* Hucheson, hath or doth hold in the said playhouse: Provided he be still accountable to me for his care and well ordering the said company. Given under my hand and seal this 27th June 1640. 'P. and M.'

¹ This license is without date, and was found by Malone among the loose papers of Sir H. Herbert: he thought that the time when it was written was June 1660, but there is no sufficient reason for supposing it to be of so late a date by perhaps nearly twenty years, although Sir H. Herbert might use it in 1660 as a piece of evidence for the purpose of re-establishing his then disputed authority. It runs thus:—'For Mr. William Beeston.—Whereas the allowance of plays, the ordering of players and play-makers, and the permission for erecting of playhouses, hath, time out of minde whereof the memory of man is not to the contrary, belonged to the Master of his Maties office of the Revells: And whereas Mr. William Beeston hath desired authority and lycence from mee to continue the house called Salisbury Court Playhouse in a playhouse, which was formerly built and erected into a playhouse by the permission and lycence of the Master of the Revells.

'These are, therefore, by virtue of a grant under the great seal of England, and of the constant practice thereof, to continue and constitute the said house, called Salisbury Court Playhouse, into a playhouse, and to authorize and lycence the said Mr. Beeston to sett, lett, or use it for a

and with so much virulence, that on the 11th September the performances at all playhouses and Paris Garden were prohibited by the following order from the public authorities.

‘Whereas the infection of the plague is much increased in and about London, and it is very dangerous to permit any company or concourse of people to meet and assemble together at playhouses or Parish Garden. It was therefore this day ordered at the Board, that all players, both their Majesty’s servants and others, as also the keepers of Parish Garden, be hereby required and commanded *for six months* to shut up their playhouses, and not to exercise or play in any of them, or in any other place within the City or suburbs of London, till it shall please God to cease the infection. And yet farther order shall be given by the Board. Hereof all the masters and others of the stage players besides are to take notice and to conform themselves, as they will answer it at their perils.’

(Indorsed) ‘11th Sep. 1640. Order to suppress the players.’

How long the restraint lasted we have no information, and all we hear is, that on the very next day after the King made his extraordinary and impolitic visit to the
 A. D. House of Commons to demand the five members, viz.,
 1642. on Twelfthday 1641-2, *The Scornfull Lady* was performed at the Cockpit in Whitehall: the King and Queen were in no mood to be present, but the Prince was there, and Sir H. Herbert adds that ‘it was the only play acted at Court in the whole Christmas’.¹ The latest entries in his

playhouse, wherein comedies, tragedies, tragicomedies, pastoralls, and interludes, may be acted. Provided that noe persons be admitted to act in the said playhouse, but such as shall be allowed by the Master of his Maties office of the Revells. Given under my hand and seale of the office of the Revells, this —.’

¹ By a warrant in the Chapter-house, dated the 17th of April 1641, exempting the King’s musicians from the payment of subsidies, it appears that they were then no fewer than fifty-eight in number.

The Musicians for wind-instruments were these — Jerome Lanier,

Register relate to two plays by a dramatist of the name of Kirke, only one piece by whom has reached us in a printed form :—‘ June, 1642. Received of Mr. Kirke, for a new play, which I burnt for the ribaldry and offence that was in it, 2*l*. Received of Mr. Kirke, for another new play, called *The Irish Rebellion*, the 8th of June 1642, 2*l*.’

Clement Lanier, Anthony Bassano, Andrew Carrier, Robert Baker, Peter Guy, Alphonso Ferabosco, Henry Ferabosco, Thomas Mell, William Gregory, William Lanier, Thomas Snowsman, Richard Blagrove, Henry Bassano, Christopher Bell, John Mason, Robert Strong, Francis Smith, and John Strong.

Musicians for the Violins—Thomas Lupo, Thomas Warren, Leonard Mell, John Hopper, Davies Mell, Nicholas Pikard, Stephen Nau, Richard Dorney, James Woodington, Simon Nau, Ambrose Byland, Theophilus Lupo, Bastian Lapiere, and George Turgis.

Musicians for the Waytes—Nicholas Lanier (Master of Music), Nicholas Duvall, John Coggeshall, John Lanier, John Kelly, John Taylor, Anthony Roberts, Thomas Foord, John Drew, Edward Wormall, William Lawes, John Wilson, Deitricht Steefkin, John Fox, Giles Tomkins, Lewis Evans, Philip Squire, Daniel Tarrant, Timothy Collins, John Friend, Robert Douland, Robert Tomkins, Charles Collman, Thomas Warwick, and Mons. La Stelle.

Besides these musicians, the King kept a serjeant trumpeter and eighteen trumpeters as part of his household.

By a similar warrant, of the 20th of April 1641, we find that the following was the establishment of the Chapel Royal :—

Subdean—Stephen Boughton.

Chaplains—Anthony Kirby, Richard Cotten, Ezechiel Wade, Edmond Nelham, Roger Nightingale, and John Frost.

Gentlemen of the Chapel—Thomas Day, John Woodeson, William Nest, George Cooke, George Sheffield, Walter Porter, Thomas Tomkins, Ralph Amner, Thomas Piers, John Cobb, Richard Portman, John Harding, Henry Lawes, Richard Boughton, Thomas Rayment, Richard Sandy, Nathaniel Pownall, George Millbourne, Thomas Hazard, Richard Jennings, Thomas Warwick, Richard Walkins, Matthew Peare, William Webb, and William Cross; besides the yeoman and grooms of the Chapel.

Sir H. Herbert adds, after noticing this latest act of his authority, 'here ended my allowance of plays, for the war began in August 1642'. The first rencontre, in fact, took place on the 22nd of September of that year.

On the 2nd of September had been issued 'An Ordinance of both Houses of Parliament, for the suppressing of public stage-plays throughout the kingdom during these calamitous times'.¹ It was in the following form :—

'AN ORDINANCE OF THE LORDS AND COMMONS CONCERNING
STAGE-PLAYS.

'Whereas the distressed estate of Ireland, steeped in her own blood, and the distracted estate of England, threatened with a cloud of blood by a civil war, call for all possible means to appease and avert the wrath of God appearing in these judgments : amongst which fasting and prayer, having been often tried to be very effectual, have been lately and are still enjoined ; and whereas public sports do not well agree with public calamities, nor public stage-plays with the seasons of humiliation, this being an exercise of sad and pious solemnity, and the other being spectacles of pleasure, too commonly expressing lascivious mirth and levity : it is therefore thought fit and ordained by the Lords and Commons in this Parliament assembled, that while these sad causes and set-times of humiliation do continue, public stage-plays shall cease and be forborne. Instead of which are recommended to the people of this land the profitable and seasonable considerations of repentance, reconciliation and peace with God, which probably will produce outward peace and prosperity, and bring again times of joy and gladness to these nations.

'Sept. 2, 1642.'

¹ *Harl. MSS.*, 581. It was succeeded, on the 5th of May 1643, by a resolution 'that the book concerning the enjoying and tolerating of sports upon the Lords day be forthwith burned by the hand of the common hangman in Cheapside and other usual places'. It was farther directed, that the Sheriffs of London should 'see the books burned', and on the 10th of May the order was carried into execution.

We have distinct proof of only one infraction of this ordinance, which in its form was temporary, although by the framers, perhaps, intended to be permanently enforced. It seems to have originated, not merely in a spirit of religious dislike to dramatic performances, but in a politic caution, lest play-writers and players should avail themselves of their power over the minds of the people to instil notions and opinions hostile to the authority of a puritanical Parliament. The infraction of the ordinance took place rather more than two years after it was published, viz., on the 6th October 1644, when some players were disturbed at the Salisbury-court Theatre, while performing Beaumont and Fletcher's *King and no King*. The Sheriffs of London dispersed the audience, and seized the person of at least one of the performers, whose name was Timothy Reade, and who was at that time an actor of clowns' parts of great reputation.¹ We

¹ He is made one of the speakers in a curious tract, sold among Fillingham's books in 1805, called 'The Stage-Player's Complaint, in a pleasant Dialogue between Cane of the *Fortune*, and Reed of the *Friars*. Deploring their sad and solitary conditions, for want of employment in this heavy and contagious time of the plague in London'. It is without date, but it was probably published during the plague of 1625, when Reed belonged to the Blackfriars company, though in 1644 he was playing at Salisbury Court. He is thus mentioned in the prelude to Goffe's *Careless Shepherdess*, printed in 1656, when the theatre was upon the point of reviving. A Landlord is enlarging upon the excellence of having a fool in every act of a play, and upon the laughter produced by the performer of the part of the *Changling*, in Middleton's play of that name: Thrift, a citizen, joins heartily in these commendations of the fool, and adds,

'I'd rather see him leap, laugh, or cry,
Than hear the gravest speech in all the play.
I never saw *Rheade* peeping through the curtain,
But ravishing joy entered into my heart.'

Reed is applauded in Gayton's *Festivous Notes on Don Quixote*, 1654, as 'the most incomparable mimic on the face of the earth': he was then dead,

have no account of the result of this transaction, nor whether Reade sustained any farther punishment.

The *Account-book* and *Diary* of Sir H. Mildmay establish that plays were performed even in 1643, although he does not insert the names of them: there are, however, only two applicable to that year, and one of those is questionable:—‘20 Aug. 1643. To a playe and other foleyes, 2s. 1d.—16 Nov. 1643. To a playe of warre, 9d.’

This ‘play of war’ was perhaps, only a fencing match between two swordsmen; and in the *Dairy*, Mildmay is more explanatory as to the last entry above given. ‘Att home to dynner, and then with company to a play, where was a disaster.’—Here we are left in the dark as to the nature of the ‘disaster’: if the ‘play’, were a contest between two fencers, ‘playing a prize’, as it was termed, the ‘disaster’ might be an accident which befel one of them: if the ‘play’, on the other hand, were the performance of a drama, it is possible that Sir H. Mildmay, by the ‘disaster’, refers to some legalized interruption by the Sheriffs, or soldiery, in the course of the representation.

Just before Christmas, 1642-3, came out a satirical pamphlet and, like others, had exhibited at Bartholomew Fair; in 1629 he had played Gratiana’s maid in Shirley’s *Wedding*.

The last actor before the civil wars who obtained reputation in the part of the Changeling, was an actor of the name of Robins, whose name has before occurred, and regarding whom we meet with the following notice in a tract already quoted: he is there mentioned in conjunction with two other celebrated performers.—‘We need not any more stage-plays: we thank them [the Puritans] for suppressing them: they save us money; for I’ll undertake we can laugh as heartily at Foxley, Peters, and others of their godly ministers, as ever we did at Cane at the Red Bull, Tom Pollard in the *Humourous Lieutenant*, Robins in the *Changeling*, or any humourist of them all.’—*A Key to the Cabinet of the Parliament*, 1648. The Christian name of Robins was William, and he had played Rawbone in Shirley’s *Wedding* in 1629, at the Phoenix in Drury Lane.

in favour of the Cavaliers, and in ridicule of the Parliamentarians, which refers to the Ordinance of Suppression of the 2nd September, and shews that, even thus early in the contest, many of the players had entered the royal service, naming one in particular, William Trig, who had obtained a Captain's commission, and who, we have seen, was one of the King's players in 1636. The tract is called *Certaine Propositions offered to the consideration of the Honourable Houses of Parliament*, and is without the name of any printer: it contains the following, as its fifth proposition:—

‘That being your sage counsels have thought fit to vote down stage players, root and branch; but many, even of the well-affected to that reformation, have found, and hope hereafter to find, play-houses most convenient and happy places of meeting; and that now in this bag-pipe, minstrelsy week (I mean this red pack of leizure days that is coming), there must be some enterludes, whether you will or no, you would be pleased to declare yourselves, that you never meant to take away the calling of stage-plays, but reform the abuse of it: that is, that they bring no profane plots, but take them out of the Scripture all (as that of Joseph and his Brethren would make the ladies weep; that of David and his troubles would do pretty well for the present; and doubtless Susannah and the two Elders would be a scene that would take above any that was ever presented). It would not be amiss, too, if, instead of the music that plays between acts, there were only a Psalm sung for distinction sake. This might be easily brought to pass, if either the Court playwrights be commanded to read the Scripture, or the City Scripture readers be commanded to write plays. This, as it would much advantage our part, so would it much disadvantage the King's; for, as by it we should gain a new place of edifying, so Captain Trigg, and the rest of the players which are now in service, would doubtlessly return to their callings, and much lessen the King's army.’¹

¹ Another proposition is the following, which, though not connected with our subject, may be quoted for its curiosity: it is the first in the list.

Another tract, of a character somewhat similar, bearing date 'January 24, 1643', and exclusively devoted to the subject of plays and players, may also be here mentioned. It is called *The Actor's Remonstrance, or Complaint, for the silencing of their profession, and banishment from their several Playhouses*, where we find the allowance of bear-baiting and puppet-shows, while regular dramatic performances are forbidden. Here also it is urged, that at the 'private houses' of Blackfriars, the Cock-pit, and Salisbury Court, 'all obscene and scurrilous jests' had been expunged from the plays acted before the suppression, but nothing is said regarding the public theatres.¹

The ordinance of the 2nd September 1642, not having been found effectual for its purpose, another was adopted, and published on the 22nd October 1647, which is thus

'That the time of gaming being now come in, you would be pleased to take into your serious consideration that scandalous pack of cards, which hath upon the coats names unfit for regenerate ears—as Hercules, Alexander, Julius Cæsar, and Hector of Troy, and such like; and that you would change them into Old-Testament names; as the Kings to be David, Josiah, Solomon, Hezekiah; the Queens, Sarah, Rachel, Hester, Susannah; and the Knaves, lastly, Balaac, Achitophel, Tobit, and Bel,' etc.

¹ In the newspaper called *Perfect Occurrences* from Sept. 19th to Sept. 26th, 1645, occurs the following notice regarding the King's players.

'Sept. 22nd.—The King's players have come in, and have thrown themselves on the mercy of Parliament. They offer to take the covenant, and (if they may be accepted) are willing to put themselves into their service.'

Perhaps the ordinance of Oct. 22nd, 1647, was produced by what happened at Salisbury Court Theatre on the 6th of the same month. According to the *Perfect Occurrences*, the sheriffs of London then interrupted the performance of *King and no King*, when they took 'Tim Reade the fool' into custody, and dismissed the audience; among whom were 'some young lords and eminent persons': it is added that there were 'men and women with the boxes that took the monies'.

entitled in a tract, in which it was printed for the information of all whom it might concern: 'An Ordinance of the Lords and Commons, assembled in Parliament, for the Lord Mayor of the City of London, and the Justices of the Peace, to suppress Stage-plays and Interludes', etc. It runs as follows:—

'*Die Veneris, Octob. 22, 1647.*—For the better suppression of Stage-plays, Interludes, and Common Players. — It is this day ordered, by the Lords and Commons in Parliament assembled, that the Lord Mayor, Justices of the Peace, and Sheriffs of the City of London and Westminster, the Counties of Middlesex and Surrey, or any two or more of them, shall and may, and are hereby authorised and required to enter into all houses, and other places within the city of London, and liberties thereof, and other places within their respective jurisdictions, where stage plays, interludes, or other common plays are or shall be acted or played, and all such common Players or Actors, as they upon view of them, or any one of them, or upon oaths by two credible witnesses (which they are hereby authorised to minister), shall be proved before them, or any two of them, to have acted or played in such Playhouses or places above-said; and all person and persons so offending to commit to any common jail or prison, there to remain until the next general Sessions of the Peace, holden within the said City of London or Liberties thereof, and places aforesaid, or sufficient security entered for his or their appearance at the said Sessions, there to be punished as Rogues, according to law.

'JO. BROWN, Cleric. Parliamentorum.

'HEN. ELSYNGE, Cler. Parl. Dom. Com.'¹

Even the exercise of this summary power was not found sufficient to put an end to theatrical performances, for which, perhaps, the desire of those not in authority increased in proportion to the difficulty of gratifying it; and on the 22nd of

¹ London, printed by Robert Ibbitson, 1647; and Scobell's *Coll.*, Anno 1647, ch. 97.

January 1647-8, the House of Commons received information that plays were still acted in different parts of London and Middlesex. The following is given in Rushworth,¹ as the course of proceeding upon the occasion :—

‘Saturday, Jany. 22, 1647.—This day the House was informed, that many Stage-Plays were acted in the several parts of the City, and County of Middlesex, notwithstanding the Ordinance of Parliament to the contrary. The House hereupon ordered, that an Ordinance should be drawn for suppressing all Stage-plays, and taking down all their boxes, stages and seats in the several houses where the said Plays are usually acted, and make it unserviceable for acting any plays in for the future; and for making a penalty for such as shall disobey the said Ordinance: and this Ordinance to be brought in with all convenient speed.

‘They further ordered, that the Lord Mayor, and Sheriffs, and Justices of the Peace of the City of London, and the several Militias of the Cities of London and Westminster, and likewise of the Hamlets, should take care for the suppressing of all Stage-plays for the time to come.’

By the 31st of January, however, no such ordinance had been presented to the Commons; and the Lords, on this occasion, seem to have been anxious to outstrip in zeal the other branch of the legislature: as if it did not proceed with sufficient dispatch in a matter of such urgency, they sent a message on that day, with a copy of an ordinance they had drawn up, in which they required the Commons to concur. According to Rushworth,² the matter was instantly taken up and debated in the Commons, but afterwards postponed; and the committee, to which the House had referred the drawing up of the ordinance ‘for suppressing stage-plays and punishing stage-players’, was ordered to report upon an ordinance

¹ *Collections*, part iv, vol. ii, p. 972.

² Part iv, vol. ii, p. 980.

which it seems it had, in fact, prepared, although not presented. It was reported on the same day, read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time on the Thursday following. What occasioned the farther postponement, we have no information, possibly some opposition the measure received: but on Thursday, February 3rd, nothing was done in the matter, and in the interval between January 31st and February 9th, the ordinance was recommitted. In the proceedings of the Commons on the latter day (as detailed by Rushworth¹), we read the following paragraph.

‘An Ordinance was this day reported to the House of Commons, from the Committee to whom it was formerly committed, for the more effectual suppressing of Stage-Plays, by committing and fining such as shall offend herein for the first offence, and for whipping them for the second offence, as being incorrigible: which was read the third time, and assented unto, and sent to the Lords for their Lordship’s concurrence: their Lordships concurred accordingly, and for better satisfaction the sum of the ordinance is to this effect.’

It is followed by an abridgment of the act, which, two days afterwards, was published, ‘for the suppression of stage-plays and interludes.’ It made five different provisions on the subject. 1. It declared all players rogues within the meaning of 39 Eliz. and 7 Jac. I. 2. It authorised the Lord Mayor, Justices of the Peace, and Sheriffs to pull down and demolish all stage galleries, seats and boxes. 3. It inflicted the punishment of public whipping upon all players, for the first offence, and for the second offence they were to be deemed incorrigible rogues, and dealt with accordingly. 4. It appropriated all money collected from the spectators to the poor of the parish. 5. It imposed a fine of five shillings upon every person present at the performance of a play.²

¹ Part iv, vol. ii, p. 991.

² The Act is set out at length in Scobell’s *Collection of Acts and*

Even this extraordinary severity did not completely put an end to theatrical representations; and on the 13th of September 1648, the House of Commons found it necessary

Ordinances from 1640 to 1656; and as it has never been republished in connection with the history of the stage and drama it is here subjoined:—

‘11th Feby, 1647. For the Suppression of all Stage-Plays and Interludes.—Whereas the Acts of Stage-Plays, Interludes and common Plays, condemned by ancient Heathens, and much less to be tolerated amongst professors of the Christian Religion, is the occasion of many and sundry great vices and disorders, tending to the high provocation of God’s wrath and displeasure, which lies heavy upon this kingdom, and to the disturbance of the peace thereof; in regard whereof the same hath been prohibited by Ordinance of this present Parliament, and yet is presumed to be practised by divers in contempt thereof: Therefore, for the better suppression of the said Stage-Plays, Interludes and common Players, it is ordered and ordained by the Lords and Commons in this present Parliament assembled and by authority of the same, that all Stage-players and Players of Interludes and common Plays, are hereby declared to be, and are and shall be taken to be Rogues, and punishable within the statutes of the thirty-ninth year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and the seventh year of the reign of King James, and liable to the pains and penalties therein contained, and proceeded against according to the said statutes, whether they be wanderers or no, and notwithstanding any Licence whatsoever from the King, or any person or persons to that purpose.

‘And it is further ordered and ordained by the authority aforesaid, that the Lord Mayor, Justices of the Peace, and Sheriffs of the City of London and Westminster, and of the Counties of Middlesex and Surrey, or any two or more of them, shall and may and are hereby authorised and required, to pull down and demolish, or cause or procure to be pulled down and demolished, all Stage Galleries, Seats and Boxes, erected or used, or which shall be erected and used, for the acting or playing, or seeing acted or played, such Stage-plays, Interludes and Plays aforesaid, within the said City of London and Liberties thereof, and other places within their respective jurisdictions; and all such common Players and Actors of such Plays and Interludes, as upon view of them or any one of them, or by oath of two witnesses (which they are hereby authorised to administer) shall be proved before them or any two of them, to have acted or played such Plays and Interludes, as

to appoint a Provost Marshal, whose duty it was, among other matters, *to seize all ballad-singers*, and to suppress stage-plays. The fact is thus recorded by Whitelocke :—

‘13 Sept. 1648:—Captain Bethan made Provost Martial, with power to apprehend such as stayed in town contrary to the ordin-

aforesaid, at any time hereafter, or within the space of two months before the time of the said conviction, by their warrant or warrants, under their hands and seals, to cause to be apprehended and openly and publicly whipt in some market town within their several jurisdictions during the time of the said market, and also to cause such offender or offenders to enter into recognizance or recognizances with two sufficient sureties, never to act or play any Plays or Interludes any more; and shall return in the said recognizance or recognizances into the Sizes or Sessions to be then next holden for the said counties and cities respectively; and to commit to the common jail any such persons, as aforesaid, who shall refuse to be bound and find such sureties as aforesaid, until he or they shall become so bound. And in case any such person or persons, so convicted of the said offence, shall after again offend in the same kind, that then the said person or persons so offending shall be, and is hereby declared to be, and be taken as an incorrigible rogue, and shall be punished and dealt with as an incorrigible rogue ought to be by the said statutes.

‘And it is hereby further ordered and ordained, that all and every sum and sums of money gathered, collected, and taken by any person or persons of such persons as shall come to see or be spectators of the said Stage-plays and Interludes, shall be forfeited and paid unto the Churchwardens of the Church or Parish where the said sums shall be so collected and taken, to be disposed of to the use of the poor of the said Parish, and shall from time to time be levied by the said Churchwardens and Constables of the said Parish, by warrant under the hands and seals of any two of the Justices of the Peace of the County, City or Town Corporate where the said sums are so taken and collected, upon complaint thereof to them made, on the goods and chattels of the person or persons collecting the same, or of the person and persons to whom the same shall be paid by them that collect the same, by distress and sale of their goods and chattels, rendering to them the overplus, upon examination of

ance, and to seize upon all ballad-singers, sellers of malignant pamphlets, and to send them to the several Militias, and to suppress stage-plays.¹

We may conclude, therefore, that the vigilance and activity of the Lord Mayor, Justices, and Sheriffs, had not been sufficient to accomplish the object. Even the Provost Marshal could not prevent clandestine performances; and under

the said persons, or proof made upon oath before the said Justices of the sum or sums so collected and received, which the said Justices are hereby authorized to take and examine.

‘And it is hereby further ordered and ordained, that every person or persons which shall be present and a spectator of any such Stage-play or Interlude hereby prohibited, shall for every time he shall be so present, forfeit and pay the sum of five shillings to the use of the poor of the Parish, where the said person or persons shall at that time dwell or sojourn, being convicted thereof by his own confession, or proof of any one witness upon oath, before any one Justice of Peace of the County, City or Town Corporate where the said offence is committed (who is hereby authorized to take the same oath), to be levied by the churchwardens or constables of the said Parish, by warrant of the said Justice of Peace, by distress and sale of the goods of the said person offending, rendering to him the overplus.

‘And it is hereby further ordered and ordained, that all Mayors, Bailiffs, Constables and other Officers, Soldiers and other persons, being thereunto required, shall be from time to time, and at all times hereafter, aiding and assisting unto the said Lord Mayor, Justices of the Peace and Sheriffs in the due execution of this Ordinance, upon pain to be fined for their contempt in their neglect or refusal thereof.’

¹ Malone is in error in most of his figures when he is speaking of the closing of the theatres at this period. He tells us (*Shakespeare by Boswell*, iii, 92) that the ordinance (meaning the act) was passed on the 13th of February 1647-8. It was passed on the 9th of February, and promulgated, according to the date in Scobell, on the 11th of February. He gives the date of the appointment of Captain Bethan, 13th of December 1648, when he was made Provost Marshal three months earlier; and he cites, as his authority, Whitelocke's *Memorials*, p. 332, when the proper reference is p. 337.

date of the 20th of December 1649, Whitelocke registers, that 'some stage-players at the Red Bull, in St. John's-street, were apprehended by troopers, their clothes taken away, and themselves carried to prison.'¹ The company at Salisbury Court Theatre seems to have been most disobedient to the orders of Parliament; and in the *Perfect Occurrences*, under date of December 29th, 1648, we are told that they were disturbed, when they were acting a play, the title of which is not given: it is added that the military took the players of the fool and of the King to Whitehall, in their dresses, insulting his Majesty by taking off and putting on his crown repeatedly as they proceeded through the streets.

The latest infraction of the act of suppression, of which we have intelligence, occurred at Witney, in Oxfordshire, when *Mucedorus* was acted by strolling players. They had previously represented it at Moore, Stanlake, Southleigh, Cumer, and other places, so that the law was not very rigidly enforced in that part of the kingdom; and the representation at Witney, on the 3rd of February 1653-4, was not interrupted either by the civil or military authorities, but by an accident by which some lives were lost, and many persons were wounded. John Rowe, of C. C. C. in Oxford, Lecturer to the town of Witney, published an account of the catastrophe in a pamphlet of which the following is the title:—'*Tragi-Comædia*. Being a brief relation of the strange and wonderful hand of God, discovered at Witney in the Comedy acted February the third, where there were some slaine, many hurt, and several other remarkable passages', etc.¹

The performance of Davenant's 'opera', as he himself calls

¹ *Memorials*, p. 435, edit. 1732.

² This tract was printed at Oxford 'by L. Litchfield for Henry Cripps, 1653-4'.

it,¹ *The Siege of Rhodes*, in 1656, is to be looked upon as the first step towards the revival of dramatic performances, and more properly belongs to the transactions of the reign of Charles II; but we may add here, for the sake of completeness, the following extract from *The Public Intelligencer* of Dec. 1658.

‘A course is ordered for taking into consideration the Opera shewed at the Cockpit in Drury Lane: and the persons to whom it stands referred are to send for the Poet and the Actors, and to inform themselves of the nature of the work, and to examine by what authority the same is exposed to public view. And they are also to take the best information they can concerning the acting of stage-plays, and upon the whole to make report.’

For the same reason, and because it has hitherto been altogether neglected and omitted, we add the copy of a Patent or Licence granted by King Charles II, one of the first of its kind, issued by him after his arrival at Whitehall.

‘BY THE KING.

‘CHARLES R.—Charles by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc. To all to whom these presents shall come greeting. Whereas we have thought

¹ And as it is called in the following lines by Thomas Pecke, in his *Parnassi Puerperium*, 1659, addressed ‘to the egregious poet, Sir Will. Davenant’:

‘That Ben, whose head deserved the Roscian bayes,
Was the first gave the name of works to plays;
You, his corrival, in this waspish age
Are more than Atlas to the fainting stage.
Your *Bonus Genius* you this way display,
And to delight us in your *Opera*.’

The sense seems incomplete; but the author does not show, in any part of his work, that he had much of that commodity to spare: to read *do* or *so* for *to* in the last line might improve it.

fit to allow such public presentations of Tragedies and Comedies as have been formerly permitted by our Royal Predecessors for the harmless recreation and divertisement of such of our good subjects and foreigners as shall be disposed to resort to them; and being well informed of the art and skill of George Jolly, gentleman, for the purposes aforesaid, do hereby give and grant unto the said George Jolly full power and authority to erect one Company, consisting respectively of such persons as he shall chuse and appoint; and to purchase build or hire at his cost and charge one House or Theatre, with all convenient rooms and other necessities thereunto appertaining, for the representation of Tragedies, Comedies, Plays, Operas, Farces, and all other entertainments of that nature in any convenient place, and likewise to settle and establish such payments, to be paid by those that shall resort to see the said representations performed, as either have been customably given and taken in the like kind, or as shall be reasonable in regard of the great expences of scenes, music, and such new decorations as have been formerly used, with further power to make such allowances, out of that which he shall so receive, to the Actors and other persons employed in the said representations in the said House respectively, as he shall think fit: the said Company to be under the government and authority of him the said George Jolly. And in regard of the extraordinary licentiousness that has been lately used in things of this nature, our pleasure is that you do not at any time hereafter cause to be acted or represented any Play, Enterlude, or Opera containing any matter of profanation, scurrility, or obscenity: and this our grant and authority made to the said George Jolly shall be effectual, notwithstanding any former grant made by us to our trusty and well beloved servant Thomas Killigrew, Esq., and Sir William Davenant, Knight, or any other person or persons whatsoever to the contrary. Given under our Signet at the Court at Whitehall, the 24th day of December 1660, in the 12th year of our reign.—By his Majesty's command,

‘EDW. NICHOLAS.’

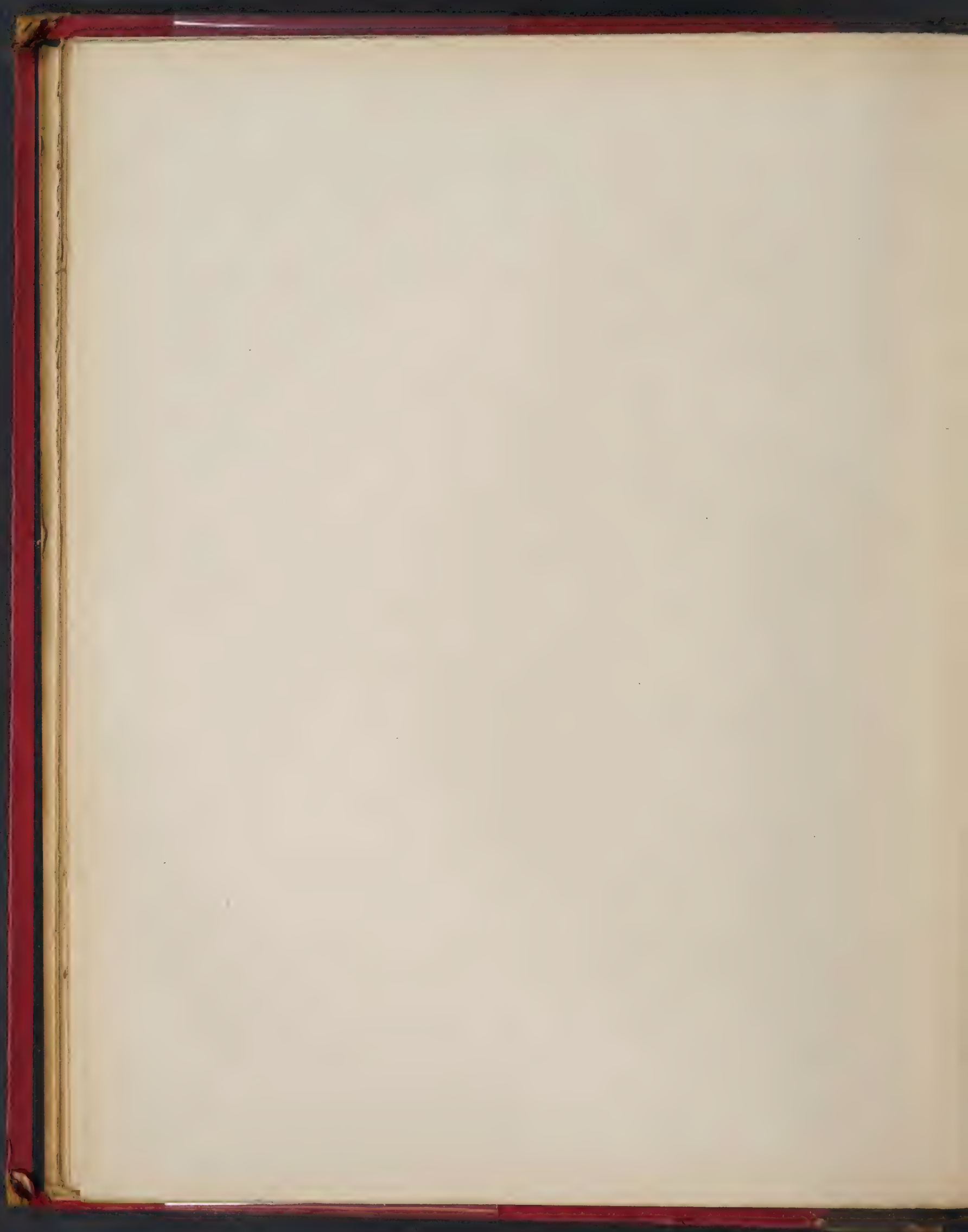
Having thus brought down the historical details regarding
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dramatic Representations, Theatres, and Actors, from the earliest times to the period of the Restoration, we proceed to give an account of the pieces themselves, in the various classes to which, as literary productions, they belong. It seems not improbable that more of these have been lost than have been preserved.

THE HISTORY
OF
DRAMATIC POETRY.

MIRACLE-PLAYS.



INTRODUCTION TO MIRACLE-PLAYS.

THE dramatic productions of this country exist in no more ancient form than that of plays founded upon the Old and New Testaments, with additions from the apocryphal gospels: the legends of the lives of saints and martyrs appear also to have afforded subjects for exhibitions of the same kind.¹ Their proper designation is Miracles, or Plays of Miracles.²

In their earliest state these pieces were of the simplest con-

¹ The history of St. George of Cappadocia seems very frequently to have been employed for this purpose. A Chronicler of the events of the reign of Henry V (see *Ann. of the Stage*, vol. i, p. 29) gives an account of a representation of St. George, before that King and the Emperor Sigismund at Windsor, in 1416: the description, however, is not very intelligible. The play of *St. George* was performed in 1511 at Basingbourne, in Cambridgeshire, and the particulars of charge, etc., are given by Warton, *Hist. Engl. Poet.*, iv, 151, edit. 8vo.

² Warton, Percy, Hawkins, Malone, and others, have concurred in calling them 'Mysteries', a term at a very early date adopted in France, but in any similar sense, we apprehend (until comparatively a recent period), unknown in England. Dodsley, in the preface to the *Collection of Old Plays* he published in 1744, seems to have been the first to use the word 'Mystery', to denote one of our most ancient dramatic representations. The Latin word commonly employed for this purpose in the infancy of our stage was *ludus*:—thus Fitzstephen mentions the *ludos sanctiores* of London, and Matthew Paris, the *ludum de Sancta Katherina* at Dunstable, adding the further information that such pieces were vulgarly called *Miracula*. Robert Grossetete, writing his *Manuel de Péché*, about the same date, terms them in French *Miracles*; and Robert de Brunne, translating that poem, employs the same word. The author of *Piers Ploughman's Crede* also calls them 'Miracles', and Chaucer de-

struction, merely following the incidents of Scripture or of the *Pseudo-evangelium*, the dialogue being maintained by the characters there introduced. By degrees, however, more invention was displayed, especially with reference to the persons concerned in the conduct of the story.

Although Miracles, or Plays of Miracles, are the source and foundation of our national drama, they have hitherto been passed over with little notice; and, owing to want of that knowledge which can only be obtained by due examination, extraordinary mistakes have been committed regarding them. Among these mistakes may, perhaps, be included the sup-nominates them 'Plays of Miracles'. In the *Household-book* of Henry VII they are once entered as 'Marvels', but 'marvel' and 'miracle' may, perhaps, be considered synonymous. 'Plays', as a generic term, was also very early in use; and, that they might not be confounded with games, they were subsequently distinguished as 'stage-plays'. The word 'interludes' became the most frequent appellation for them in the reign of Henry VII; but, perhaps, strictly speaking, it had reference to a particular species of dramatic entertainment. The title of a tract, by John Bale, would appear, to those who have not seen it, to contradict this position: it is called *The Mysterye of Inyquyte*, Iniquity being the name of a personage who figured very prominently in some of our older dramatic representations, called 'Morals', though not in 'Miracles'. Bale's tract is, however, merely a prose answer to a Roman Catholic poem, *The Genealogy of Ponce Pantolabus*, which attacked *seriatim* all the principal reformers: it was printed at Geneva, in 1545, by Michael Woode. With regard to the employment of the word *Mistère*, by the French, Roquefort, in his *Glossaire de la Langue Romane* (8vo. Paris, 1808), informs us, that *Miracles* were *par suite* called *Mistères*, and that both meant *pièces de notre ancien théâtre*; but under the word *Mistère*, he says nothing of its application. It was not only well understood in France to mean a dramatic performance, but in time it was used synonymously with *Comédie*; and, according to *Gouget* (*Bibl. Franç.*, xi, 212), in the reign of Louis XII, Gringoire obtained the title of *Compositeur, Historien, et Facteur de Mistères ou Comédies*. The compound term of *Miracle-play* seemed to us best adapted, according to the old authorities, to express briefly the origin and nature of the representation.

position, that as England possesses an earlier record of the performance of a Miracle-play than has yet been produced by any foreign country, they were indigenous. Some of the ensuing remarks may warrant the inference, that if we did not derive them from France, they were originally written in the language of that country.

Two conjectures have been hazarded respecting the origin of these performances in Europe: the one is that of Voltaire, (in his *Essais sur les Mœurs et l'Esprit des Nations*), that Gregory Nazianzen, in the fourth century, wrote his play of *Christ's Passion*, and others of the same kind, at Constantinople, *pour les opposer aux ouvrages dramatiques des anciens Grecs et des anciens Romains*.¹ the other conjecture also, according to Warton, is that of a French writer, who contends that the monks of the middle ages employed this species of dramatic amusement, to supersede the dancing, music, mimicry, and profane mummeries at ancient fairs.² Both these posi-

¹ Stephen Gosson, one of the most zealous enemies of our theatrical representations in the middle of the reign of Elizabeth, assigned a reason for the invention by Nazianzen sufficiently absurd. The advocates of the stage had adduced *Christ's Passion*, by Nazianzen, to show that he and other fathers approved dramatic performances; to which Gosson replies, that Nazianzen wrote his piece to reform the then existing and established Popish plays on the feast of *Corpus Christi*, which was not made a festival for eight or nine centuries afterwards: 'For Nazianzen (says he), detesting the corruption of the *Corpus Christi* plays, that were set out by the Papists, and inveighing against them, thought it better to write the *Passion of Christ* in numbers himself, that all such as delight in numerosity of speech might read it—not behold it on the stage, where some base fellow, that played Christ, would bring the person of Christ into contempt.'—*Plays Confuted in Five Actions*. No date, but printed in 1581 or 1582. Sign E, 5 b.

² *Hist. Engl. Poet.*, iii, 195, edit. 8vo. Warton does not name his author, but calls him merely 'a judicious French writer now living', having just before mentioned *La Fête de Foux*. It is possible that he

tions may be well founded, as they are certainly not inconsistent with each other: Gregory Nazianzen may have been the inventor of these religious plays, and ecclesiastics may have used them at a later period to reform the people, and to introduce among them a convenient knowledge of the Scriptures.¹ If Miracle-plays had their origin in Constantinople, they would soon find their way into Italy, and from thence they may have been dispersed over the rest of Europe.

The history of the French stage has not been carried higher than the thirteenth century: *au treizième siècle nous avons déjà de drames*, are the words of Le Grand:² in this country we have seen, on the authority of Matthew Paris, that the Miracle-play of Saint Katherine was acted at Dunstable very early in the twelfth century.³ Although the French have no records of so remote a date, it is admitted that the piece just named was got up by a Norman monk, who was also a member of the University of Paris.⁴

It has been established by Mr. Markland, with as much meant Du Tilliot, who, in 1741, published at Lausanne a small and learned work in 4to. on *La Fête de Foux*, and who might be living when Warton published the second 4to. volume of his *Hist. Engl. Poet.* in 1778. Du Tilliot's words are merely these:—'Lorsque les Payens embrassèrent le Christianisme, ils eurent peine à perdre l'habitude ou ils étoient de célébrer certaines fêtes rejouissantes: ils substituèrent de nouvelles aux anciennes, d'abord avec moins de licence, ce qui engagea peut-être les évêques à les tolérer quelque tems, quoique l'on puisse dire qu'ils n'épargnèrent rien pour les abolir dans la suite.'

¹ Warton (*Hist. E. P.*, iii, 195, edit. 8vo.), referring to both these conjectures, inclines to Voltaire, without perceiving that they might be reconciled.

² *Fabliaux ou Contes du XII. et du XIII. Siècle*, tom. ii, p. 122, edit. 1781.

³ *Annals of the Stage*, vol. i, p. 13.

⁴ The French had a *Mistère de Sainte Catherine*, which, according to the *MS. Histoire de Metz Véritable*, as cited in a work attributed to Les Frères Parfait (*Hist. du Théat. Franç.*, ii, 351), was performed in 1434.

clearness as after the lapse of so many centuries could be expected, that the Miracle-plays annually performed at Chester, with some interruptions, until 1577,¹ were originally produced in 1268, during the mayoralty of John Arnway.² The authorship has been assigned to Ralph Higden, the compiler of the *Polycronicon*; but if they were first acted in 1268, he could have had no connection with them then: he died, according to others, in 1377, and, in either case, was not born when they were originally represented.

¹ At least one of the series of Miracle-plays, annually exhibited at Chester, was performed in 1577: this fact appears from *Harl. MS.* 1944, which is a copy, with some additions and variations, of the work of Archdeacon Rogers upon Chester; the following extracts refer to about the period of which we are speaking:—

‘A. D. 1571.—In this yere the Whitson playes weare played in Chester.’

‘A. D. 1574.—The Whitson playes weare played in this Cittie this yere.’

‘A. D. 1577.—The Earle of Darbie did lye 2 nightes at his [the Mayor’s] howse: the *Shepheardes* play was played at the highe crosse with other triumphes.’

Had the performances not been interrupted in the intervals, Rogers would hardly have thought it necessary to specify that the plays were performed in these particular years 1571, 1574 and 1577.

By *Harl. MS.* 2105, consisting of Short Annals of Chester, from 1348 to 1580, it seems evident that, at an earlier date, a temporary stop had been put to the exhibition of the Miracle-plays: under the year 1545 is the following entry:—‘William Holcroft, Mayor. In this yere M. Holcroft died, and M. John Walley was chosyn mayor, and *the plaies went* that same yere.’ Probably during the controversies of the Reformation, the performance of Popish Miracle-plays, as they were called, was forbidden, and in 1545 they were, for the first time, allowed to be revived. In 1529, a different species of dramatic entertainment had been substituted, by the performance of a play founded upon the romance of *Robert of Cicily*. See *Annals of the Stage*, vol. i, p. 112.

² In his learned and comprehensive ‘Dissertation’, prefixed to two of the plays (one founded upon the *Old* and the other upon the *New Testament*), which he printed for the use of the Roxburghe Club, and which,

It is not, perhaps, to be disputed that Higden was in some way, and at some period, concerned in the performance of the Chester Whitsun plays: the question is, in what way and at what period?

There are two MS. copies of these productions in the British Museum, and in a note to one of them (*MS. Harl. No. 2124*) it is said (and in our present view the expression is important) that Higden 'was thrice at Rome before he could obtaine leave of the Pope to have them in the English tongue'. Warton thought the inference was, that prior to the date when Higden obtained this 'leave', performances of the kind were in Latin, and it never seems to have struck him as possible that they should have been in French.¹ If before that permission the Chester Whitsun plays were in French, and if in consequence of it Higden translated, or 'made' them into English, and so had them represented about the year 1338, it will reconcile dates, and remove much of the difficulty that has hitherto surrounded the subject. The Mayoralty of Arnway in 1268, and the instrumentality of Higden, in 1338, 'to have' the plays 'in the English tongue', have been sometimes confounded.

As the conjecture, that the Miracle-plays at Chester were first performed in French, has not before been started, it will be necessary to advert with a little particularity to the grounds on which it rests.

The law requiring that 'all pleas in the Courts of the King, or of any other lord, shall be pleaded and judged in the

with some additional notes by him, has since been incorporated in Malone's *Shakespeare by Boswell*, vol. iii. It is to be regretted that this Essay, displaying much general as well as particular information on the subject, is not there followed by the ancient religious dramas it was written to illustrate.

¹ *Hist. Engl. Poet.*, iii, 16, edit. 8vo, note *d*.

English tongue', was passed in the 36th of Edward III ; and it is the opinion of Tyrwhitt, stated in his introduction to the *Canterbury Tales*, that at the commencement of that monarch's reign, 'the French and English languages subsisted together throughout the kingdom, the higher orders, both clergy and laity, speaking almost universally French, the lower retaining the use of their native tongue, but also frequently adding to it a knowledge of the other.' Edward III, then, was the first King since the Conquest, who by law discountenanced the farther propagation of the French language in this country ; and it will not fail to strike the reader that Higden's endeavour (according to our conjecture) to procure the representation of the Chester Miracle-plays in English,¹ was accomplished in 1338, when Edward III had been eleven years on the throne.

After what Tyrwhitt has advanced upon the point,² it is not necessary to enter into a discussion of the manner in which, subsequent to the Conquest, the Norman kings and nobility endeavoured to bring the French language into common use among all classes in this country. Prelates from Normandy were placed in all the richest sees of the kingdom,

¹ It is a circumstance deserving attention, that Higden himself, in his *Polycronicon*, b. i, c. lix, laments the manner in which the English language had been impaired, and thus accounts for it :—

'This apayringe of the birthe tonge is by cause of tweye thinges : oon is for children in scole, azens the usage and maner of alle other nacions, beth compelled for to leve her owne langage, and for to constrewe her lessouns, and her thingis a-Fransche, and haveth siththe that the Normans come first into England. Also gentil mennes children beth ytautz for to speke Frensche from the tyme that thei beth rokked in her cradel, and cunneth speke, and playe with a childes brooche. And uplondish men wole likne hem self to gentil men, and fondeth with grete bisynesse for to speke Frensche for to be the more ytold of.'

² *Vide* his Essay on *Chaucer*, part i.

and they in turn chose the abbots from their countrymen, while (as Tyrwhitt has remarked), the abbots were 'not less industrious to stock their convents with foreigners whom they invited from the continent'. It is a striking circumstance, already noticed, that the author of the oldest Miracle-play of which we have any trace in our history, was a Norman monk, who had been so invited by the Abbot of St. Alban's, in the commencement of the twelfth century. How importantly the object of the court, nobility, and clergy in this respect, would be aided by the representation among the people of dramatic performances in French, requires no proof.

The Chester Miracle-plays themselves contain some internal evidence which, strange to say, has hitherto escaped notice. Small portions have been handed down to us in French: some sentences of the speech of Augustus Cæsar in the sixth play, and part of the dialogue between the three Kings in the eighth play, are still preserved in that language in the MSS.; and there could have been no possible reason for converting them into French, if they had been originally composed in English or in Latin. They are most probably relics of the ancient structure, retained in the current transcripts, although Higden might not think them necessary for the performance, and therefore did not include them in his version.¹

¹ To Mr. Sharpe's accurate, circumstantial, and curious Dissertation on the plays of the same kind, performed by the Trading Companies of Coventry, at the feast of *Corpus Christi*, is added the piece represented by the Tailors and Sheermen, as late as the year 1534; and it contains a speech by a *Nuntius*, which is in French, and possibly for the same reason. The word *nouvelles* also occurs in it, instead of 'tidings', by which it was usually rendered. Excepting upon this supposition, how can we account for the conclusion of Herod's speech in the 15th of the plays in the *Townley MS.*, 'I can no more *French*'? The translator found it in the original, and rendered it literally into English; and it would not be unnatural for this 'Paynim', who was made to speak French

But this point does not depend upon inference only: some positive testimony may be brought forward, establishing the connexion between the Miracle-plays of this country, and the *Mistères* of France.

In *Le Mistère du viel Testament par personnages, joué à Paris*, printed by Antoine Verard about 1490, but acted at a much earlier date, and in that part of it which treats of *La création d'Adam et d'Eve*, the following passage is put into the mouth of the first man.

'Hoc nunc os de ossibus meis,
Et caro de carne mea.
Ses os sont de mes os formez,
Et sa chair de ma chair venue:
Car tout d'un sang sont conformez,
Selon quelle est de moy cogneue.
Dont pourtant quelle est d'homme yssue
Sera appelée virago,
Pource que je lay apperceue,
Quia sumpta est de viro.'

In the second of the Chester series of plays, on the same occasion, namely, after the Deity has taken Eve out of the side of Adam, the later observes:—

'I see well, Lorde, through thy grace,
Bone of my bone thou has her mase,¹
And fleshe of my fleshe she hase,
And my shape through thy sawe.²

for the purpose of the play, to stop short on such an account, especially as it gave the author an opportunity, which he seems to have wanted, of bringing the piece to a short conclusion. This point is further considered in a note upon the passage itself in the course of the ensuing examination of Miracle-plays.

¹ *Mase*] Made.

² *Sawe*] Saying or Speech.

Wherefore she shalbe called, I wysse,
Virago, nothing amisse,
 For out of man taken she is,
 And to man she shall drawe.'

It must be admitted, that this passage looks more like a direct translation, than it perhaps really was; for in the Latin version of the Bible by St. Jerome, formerly held in such high veneration, the part of the second chapter of Genesis, which relates to the creation of Eve, is thus given—*Hoc nunc os de ossibus meis, et caro de carne mea: hæc vocabitur virago, quoniam de viro sumpta est.* At the same time there are points of resemblance between the French and the English, which are not to be found in the Latin.¹ Another instance, apparently of translation, is to be found in the same play: in the French, before Cain kills Abel, he says:—

'Si feray je le coup, et la follye,
 Dieu ne scauroit de ce fait m'arrester,
 Ne le paillart dentre mes mains oster.'

which is thus rendered in the Chester play:—

'Though God stode here in this place,
 For to help thee in this case,
 Thou should dye before his face.'

This is hardly so literal as the following from the fourth play. In the French, Abraham being in the act of sacrificing his son, Isaac exclaims,

'Mais vueillez moy les yeulx cachier,
 Affin que le glaive ne voye;
 Quant de moy vendres approchier,
 Peult être que je fouyroye.'

¹ For the reference to St. Jerome's Bible, we are indebted to the late Mr. Douce, who, from a valuable MS. in his possession, also pointed out the manner in which Wickliffe translated the passage:—'Now bone of my bonys and fleshe of my fleshe, this shall be clepyd manny's dede, for she is taken of a man.'

Higden (on the supposition that he was the translator) rendered the lines as follows :—

‘Also, father, I pray you, hyde my eyen,
That I see not your sworde so keene ;
Your stroke, father, I would not see,
Least I against it grill.’¹

The fifth play of the Chester collection affords still further evidence to the same point : it relates to King Balak, and Balaam the prophet. In the French *Mistère*, the Ass, sorely beaten, thus addresses his rider :—

‘Balaam, suis je pas ta beste,
Sur qui tu a tousjours este,
Tant en yver comme en este ?
Te feiz jamais tell chose ?’

In the Chester play the passage occupies one line more :—

‘Ame not I, master, thyne owne asse,
To beare thee whether thou wylte passe,
And many winters ready was ?
To smyte me it is shame
Ney, never yet so served I thee.’

If it be here said, that the Bible was employed by both authors, and that the words of Scripture are by both closely followed, it may be answered, that the word ‘winter’, which is found in the French and English, is not in Numbers xxii, 30 ; and that this circumstance is evidence that one was probably a translation from the other, unless some common original can be brought forward, containing the same peculiar expression. If any such common original were discovered, it would militate against the positions, that England was in the

¹ Grill is used by Chaucer as an adjective, and it means, *horrible* or *grim* ; but here it is employed as a verb, and with great poetical force : the meaning of the line therefore is—‘Lest I shrink from it with terror’.

first instance indebted to France for Miracle-plays, or that they were written in this country in the French language. The preceding remarks apply to the performances at Chester, as we have not been able to trace the same resemblances in other similar collections; and in the Chester plays they are only found in those which relate to the history of the Old Testament.

The authors of these sacred dramas, having the advantage of a story already constructed, had only to clothe the incidents in dialogue, while the ordinary objection of want of probability could never be urged against them, even in those portions which were derived from the apocryphal gospels. The term 'Miracle' implies the divine agency, and a conviction among the auditors of the power of that agency was all that was necessary. The words of the author of *Piers Ploughman's Vision*, referring to the season of the year when representations of this kind ordinarily took place, may very fitly be applied to them:—

‘Our bileve sufficeth,
As clarkes in *Corpus Christi* singen and reden,
That *sola fides sufficit*.’

In judging of the form, incidents, and language of these productions, we must of course carry our minds back to the period when they were written or represented: we shall then find, that much that now seems absurd, ludicrous, or even profane, was then pious, awful, and impressive.

The most ancient extant specimen of a Miracle-play in English is to be found in the *Harleian MSS.* in the British Museum.¹ It formed no doubt one of a series, but the rest

¹ No. 2253. But very possibly *The Skryvener's Play*, on the incredulity of St. Thomas, may be quite as ancient, if not older. It is the property of Dr. Sykes, of Doncaster, and was discovered many years ago in the archives of the Guildhall, York. We apprehend that it may be

have not been handed down to us, and it is certainly as old as the earlier part of the reign of Edward III. It is founded upon the sixteenth chapter of the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus, and relates to the descent of Christ to hell, to liberate from thence Adam, Eve, John the Baptist, and the Prophets. It differs from other pieces of the same kind, and upon the same subject, in having an introduction and conclusion, in the way of prologue and epilogue; but in other respects it is conducted much after the usual manner, as will be hereafter more particularly explained. Besides this, and a few other single pieces, there exist in this country three sets of Miracles or Miracle-plays, which go through the principal incidents of the Old and New Testaments.¹

1. The Towneley Collection, supposed to have belonged to Widkirk Abbey, before the suppression of the monasteries, the MS. of which appears to have been written about the reign of Henry VI.²

anterior to the earliest performance of the kind yet produced: it is of the very simplest construction, and the characters are only five, while the language is at least as old as the reign of Edward II or III. It was composed for performance by the Scriveners, and the MS. bears witness to its antiquity: it was clearly one of a series relating to the events of the New Testament, but all the others, supposed to have been fifty-seven, have been lost. We have elsewhere examined it in more detail, and to lingual antiquaries it is certainly of great value.

¹ Among the *Digby MSS.* (No. 133) in the Bodleian, is a set of three Miracle-plays, never yet noticed, founded on that part of the Acts of the Apostles which relates to the conversion of St. Paul. In the same volume is bound up a long religious play, from which Warton (*H. E. P.*, iii, 187) quoted only a stage direction: it is called *Oreginale de Sca Maria Magdalena*. A very curious copy of an early Moral is in the same collection, and we have mentioned it under the proper head. An account of, and quotations from the Miracle-plays of the conversion of St. Paul, and of the Life of Mary Magdalen, are subjoined to our review of the Miracle-plays of Widkirk, Chester, and Coventry.

² The following are the subjects of the plays in this collection, being

2. A volume called the *Ludus Coventriæ*, consisting of Miracle-plays said to have been represented at Coventry on the feast of *Corpus Christi*, the MS. of which was written at least as early as the reign of Henry VII.¹

3. The Chester Whitsun plays, of which two MSS. are in the British Museum, the earliest dated in the year 1600, and the other in 1607.²

thirty in number. 1. *The Creation, and the Rebellion of Lucifer.* 2. *Mactatio Abel.* 3. *Processus Noæ cum filiis.* 4. *Abraham.* 5. *Jacob and Esau.* 6. *Processus Prophetarum.* 7. *Pharao.* 8. *Cæsar Augustus.* 9. *Annunciatio.* 10. *Salutatio Elizabethæ.* 11. *Pastorum.* 12. *Alter eorundem.* 13. *Oblatio Magorum.* 14. *Fugatio Josephi et Mariæ in Egiptum.* 15. *Magnus Herodes.* 16. *Purificatio Mariæ.* 17. *Johannes Baptista.* 18. *Conspiratio Christi.* 19. *Colaphizatio.* 20. *Flagellatio.* 21. *Processus Crucis.* 22. *Processus Talentorum.* 23. *Extractio Animarum.* 24. *Resurrectio Domini.* 25. *Peregrini.* 26. *Thomas Indiæ.* 27. *Ascensio Domini, etc.* 28. *Judicium.* 29. *Lazarus.* 30. *Suspensio Judicæ.*

¹ It consists of forty-two Plays, including one which now seems wanting in the collection: their subjects are these. 1. *The Creation.* 2. *The Fall of Man.* 3. *The Death of Abel.* 4. *Noah's Flood.* 5. *Abraham's Sacrifice.* 6. *Moses and the Ten Tables.* 7. *The Genealogy of Christ.* 8. *Anna's Pregnancy.* 9. *Mary in the Temple.* 10. *Mary's betrothment.* 11. *The Salutation and Conception.* 12. *Joseph's return.* 13. *The Visit to Elizabeth.* 14. *The Trial of Joseph and Mary.* 15. *The Birth of Christ.* 16. *The Shepherd's Offering.* 17. *Caret in MS.* 18. *Adoration of the Magi.* 19. *The Purification.* 20. *Slaughter of the Innocents.* 21. *Christ disputing in the Temple.* 22. *The Baptism of Christ.* 23. *The Temptation.* 24. *The Woman taken in Adultery.* 25. *Lazarus.* 26. *Council of the Jews.* 27. *Mary Magdalen.* 28. *Christ betrayed.* 29. *Herod.* 30. *The Trial of Christ.* 31. *Pilate's Wife's dream.* 32. *The Crucifixion.* 33. *Christ's Descent into Hell.* 34. *Sealing of the Tomb.* 35. *The Resurrection.* 36. *The Three Maries.* 37. *Christ appearing to Mary Magdalen.* 38. *The Pilgrim of Emaus.* 39. *The Ascension.* 40. *Descent of the Holy Ghost.* 41. *The Assumption of the Virgin.* 42. *Doomsday.*

² A MS. of them, dated 1604, is also in the Bodleian Library. The

Performances of the same description (as has been stated in the *Annals of the Stage*, vol. i, p. 19) took place in many parts of the kingdom. Holinshed, speaking of the third year of the reign of Edward VI,¹ mentions the plays 'accustomed yearly to be kept' at Wymondham, near Norwich; and specimens of the pieces exhibited at York and Newcastle are extant in Drake's and Brand's *Histories* of those places.² At Manningtree, with the advance of the drama, Morals (the precise nature of which will be hereafter detailed) seem to have been substituted for Miracle-plays;³ but at Tewkesbury, the most ancient species of theatrical representation appears to have been preserved until the year 1585.⁴ We find in one authority, applicable to Bristol (*Cott. MS. Jul. B xii*) that a Miracle-play was sometimes acted merely in dumb show; for when Henry

number of the plays is four-and-twenty, viz.—1. *The Fall of Lucifer*. 2. *De creatione Mundi*. 3. *De Diluvio Noæ*. 4. *De Abrahamo, Melchisedech et Loth*. 5. *De Mose et Rege Balaak, et Balaam Propheta*. 6. *De Salutatione et Nativitate Salvatoris*. 7. *De Pastoribus greges pascentibus*. 8. *De tribus Regibus Orientalibus*. 9. *De oblatione tertium Regum*. 10. *De occisione Innocentum*. 11. *De purificatione Virginis*. 12. *De Tentatione Salvatoris*. 13. *De Chelidomo et de Resurrectione Lazari*. 14. *De Jesu intrante domum Simeonis leprosi*. 15. *De Cæna Domini*. 16. *De Passione Christi*. 17. *De Descensu Christi ad Inferos*. 18. *De Resurrectione Jesu Christi*. 19. *De Christo ad Castellam Emaus*. 20. *De Ascensione Domini*. 21. *De Electione Maihiæ, etc.* 22. *Ezekiel*. 23. *De Adventu Antichristi*. 24. *De Judicio extremo*.

¹ *Chron.* fol. 1028, edit. 1587.

² See also Croft's *Excerpta Antiqua*, York, 1797, p. 105.

³ Dekker, in his *Seven Deadly Sins of London*, 1606, mentions 'the old Morals of Manningtree.' See also note to *Henry IV*, part i, act ii, scene 4.

⁴ In the accounts of the Churchwardens of Tewkesbury, under date of 1578, we read as follows:—'Payd for the players geers, six sheep-skins for Christ's garments;' and in an inventory contained in the same book occur these words, with the date of 1585.—'Eight heads of hair for the Apostles, and ten beards, and a face or vizier for the Devil.'

VII visited that city, in his progress after his coronation, *The Shipwright's Play*, relating probably to Noah's Flood, was performed before him 'without speech'.

The Cornish *Guary Miracle*, mentioned with some particularity by Carew in his *Survey of Cornwall*, 1602, was a dramatic performance of precisely the same character as the English Miracle-play, the chief, if not the only difference being, that the former was in the ancient language of that part of the kingdom, a mixture of Celtic and Saxon. There is every probability, that the *Guary Miracle* was merely a translation. Several specimens of these productions are extant; and one of them, said to have been originally written by a person of the name of Jordan, and subsequently rendered from the Cornish into English, is in the British Museum.¹

Miracle-plays were written, and even to a comparatively late period acted, by ecclesiastics. Robert Grossetete, Bishop of Lincoln (whose authority for a different purpose is cited in the *Annals of the Stage*, vol. i, p. 15), in his *Manuel de Peché*, under the head *De Miracles*, states that they were *cuntrové* by *les fols clerics*; that the clergy performed in them in disguises; and that the representations sometimes took place in churches and cemeteries, as well as in the public streets. It is recorded

¹ *Harl. MS.* 1867. A late president of the Royal Society, D. Gilbert, Esq., M.P., rendered this piece very accessible by an extremely accurate impression of it. It is made from a different MS. to that in the Museum, but there is no substantial variation. Mr. D. Gilbert also published from a MS. an ancient poem in the Cornish language, called 'Mount Calvary,' which, he states, in the preface to the *Guary Miracle*, is of a more ancient idiom than the drama. The translation of both into English was by a person of the name of John Keigwin, who died in 1710. Of Jordan, the editor says [Preface vii] he could discover nothing, beyond the fact that he lived at Helston. It is to be observed, that several passages of the Cornish play are still preserved in English, as if Jordan had left them untranslated.

of Lydgate, monk of Bury, that he was the author of 'a procession of pageants from the creation';¹ and Skelton, who had been tutor, and was subsequently chaplain to Henry VIII, mentions in his *Garlands or Chapelet of Laurell*, printed in 1523, that one of his earliest works had been a series of performances of the same kind, 'played in Joyous Garde', or Arthur's Castle.

The most authentic and indisputable testimony of the instrumentality of the clergy in the performance of dramatic representations is furnished by a valuable MS. formerly in the collection of Mr. Craven Ord:² it is a thick folio volume

¹ *Vide* Ritson's *Bibl. Poet.*, p. 79. The 'Processioun of Corpus Christi', there also attributed to Lydgate, has nothing dramatic in its shape and conduct: it consists of an enumeration and description of Patriarchs and Saints, beginning with Adam, Melchisedech, Abraham, etc., down to Ambrosius and Thomas Aquinas. The title was given by Shirley, the transcriber of the volume, who by a note at the end seems to have thought the poem incomplete: 'Shirley kowde fynde no more for this cople': however, the piece appears finished, the design having been this: before the administration of the eucharist, in some way to represent the figures of the persons successively named, in order to produce a greater degree of piety, and to make a show at the feast of *Corpus Christi*: when the figures have been exhibited one after the other, the author thus concludes:

'With there figures, shewed in yowre presence
By dyvers likenesse you to do pleasaunce,
Receyvith hem with devout reverence
This brede of lyf ye kepe in remembraunce;
Oute of this Egipt of worldly grevaunce
Yowre restoratyf celestial manna:
Of which God graunt eternal suffisaunce,
Where Aungels syng everlastyng Osanna.'

It is followed in the same MS. (*Harl. MS.* No. 2251) by a series of historical portraits, exhibited probably in the same manner, beginning with Edward of Carnarvon.

² And now in that of the Duke of Newcastle.

consisting of minute entries of all the expenses incurred by the Priory of Thetford from Christmas 1461 to Christmas 1540, after which date the house was dissolved. It contains several hundred entries of payments to players and minstrels, and, in not a few instances, it is expressly added, that the plays were represented with the assistance of the members of the convent. The accounts are not regular until the reign of Henry VII, and it is to be remarked, that the items of expense for dramatic exhibitions, when the convent lent its aid for the purpose, do not begin prior to the 11th Henry VIII. Anterior to this year, the entries usually run in more general terms: 13 Henry VII—'To menstrell and pleyers in festo Epiphie, 2s.' 19 Henry VII—'To the pley of *Myldenale*, 12d.' 21 Henry VII—'In regard lusoribus et minstrells, 17d.' 2 Henry VIII—'To the pley in sent Cuthbert parisshe, 2s.' After 10 Henry VIII, entries in the following forms are frequent: 11 Henry VIII—'Lusoribus cum adjuturio Conventus, 2s.' 12 Henry VIII—'Jocatoribus cum adjutorio conventus, 2s.' 14 Henry VIII—'Jocatoribus in Nat.: Dom: cum auxilio Conventus, 20d.' These representations, with the assistance of the ecclesiastics, usually occurred twice or three times in every year, but in the 22 Henry VIII, there were five repetitions of them. After this date (and the fact may be accounted for by the progress of the Reformation) only three entries are met with of plays performed by the convent in conjunction with common actors; and after the 24 Henry VIII, although rewards to the players of the King and of the nobility are often registered, not one occurs which shews that the members of the Priory of Thetford joined in the representation.

The British Museum contains the *Register* of the Fraternity or Guild of *Corpus Christi*, at York, from 1408 to 1546, and under the earliest date we find an enumeration of the various

properties belonging to that religious society, from which it is evident that then, and doubtless for some years afterwards, it was engaged in the representation of Miracle-plays in that city. Among the articles are more than one book of the plays, a number of banners and flags of all descriptions, vizards, beards, diadems, crowns, etc., besides the castles, or scaffolds, on which the representations took place.¹

On a former page (64) we have given some account of the *Scrivener's Play*, the sole relic of a series of religious dramas formerly exhibited at York; and it seems that great disorders had taken place there during the representation of the *Corpus Christi* plays previous to 1426, and they had in consequence been discontinued at intervals. In that year, however, a friar minor of the name of William Melton, who is called 'a professor of holy pageantry', preached several sermons in favour of them; and with a proviso that the revellings, drunken-

¹ The following are extracts from this very curious document, in which the items and their value are specified with the utmost particularity:—

'Alius liber de Ludo, 100s.

Alius liber de eodem, Anglice vocatus *crede-play*, continens 22 quaternos.

xvii. Vexilla magna, 80s.

iv. Vexilla minora de serico rubeo, 6s. 8d.

ix. Alia Vexilla vocata "pennons" de novo factis, cum scutis fidei et calicibus depictis, 11s. 6d.

xxiv. Instrumenta ferrea, vocata sokkets, ordinata pro extensione vexillorum, 4s. 6d.

Una Corona regis cum ceptro, et una cithera, 6d.

iv. Alia Vexilla vocata 'pennons', 3s. 4d.

x. Diademata pro Christo et Apostolis cum una larva, et aliis novem "cheverons", 6d.

xiv. Torchia.

iii. Judasses veteras, 1s. 2d.

xii. Castella picta cum calicibus aureis, et laminis de ferro ejusdem castellis pertinentibus, 4s.

xxxiv. Vexilla picta per torcheis ordinatis, 20s.'

ness, etc., with which they had been previously attended, should be reformed, they were made annual in consequence of his exertions. The instrument published on this occasion recites, that 'for a long course of time' prior to 1426, 'the artificers and tradesmen have, at their own expence, acted several plays.'¹ Perhaps the disorders to which we have alluded arose from the non-interference of the clergy, for a time, in these representations; and hence it might be inferred, that the fraternity of *Corpus Christi* had relinquished them to the 'artificers and tradesmen' of York.

It is as certain, that churches and chapels of monasteries were the earliest theatres, as that ecclesiastics were the earliest actors of Miracle-plays: when the one practice or the other was discontinued, we have no distinct evidence:² with regard to the first, we are told by Burnet,³ that as late as 1542 Bishop Bonner issued a proclamation to the clergy of his diocese, prohibiting 'all manner of common plays, games, or interludes to be played, set forth, or declared within their churches and chapels'. From the following passage in a tract printed in 1572, it appears that even then interludes were occasionally played in churches: the author is speaking of the manner in which the clergy neglect their duties:—'He againe posteth it (the service) over as fast as he can gallop; for either he hath two places to serve, or else there are some games to be played in the afternoon, as lying for the whetstone, heathenishe dauncing for the ring, a beare or a bull to be

¹ See the Appendix to Drake's *History of York*, where this document is inserted at length.

² The employment of churches for the representation of the *passio Christi* and the *Vita alicujus sancti* is justified by Johannes Aquila, in his *Enchiridion de omni ludorum genere*, cap. v. Oppenheim, 1516. He, however, denies the lawfulness of *Ludi theatrales, seu larvales in ecclesiis, seu aliis locis sacris*.

³ *Hist. of the Reformation*, 1 Coll. Rec., p. 255, edit. fol.

bayted, or else jack-an-apes to ryde on horseback, or an *entertainment to be played*; and if no place else can be gotten, it must be *doone in the church*.¹ As to the last, we know (beyond what has been already proved by the accounts of Thetford Priory, and the inventory of theatrical properties belonging to the fraternity of *Corpus Christi*, at York), that in 1519 Cardinal Wolsey found it necessary, in the regulations of the Canons Regular of St. Austin, to order, that the brothers should not be *lusores*.² That ecclesiastics commonly performed in plays in 1511, is proved moreover by Dean Colet's *Oratio ad Clerum*, delivered in convocation in that year, in which he calls upon the heads of the church to remember and put in force the laws and rules which forbade the clergy to be *publici lusores*.³

In cities and large towns, at a very early date, the getting

¹ *An Answer to a Certain Libel, intituled, 'An Admonition to the Parliament, by John Whitgift'*. 4to, 1572.

² Malone (*Shakespeare by Boswell*, iii, 13, n. 7) follows Warton in a reference to Wolsey's ordinances for the Canons Regular of St. Augustine, 1519, in which the historian of English poetry supposes the Cardinal to forbid them to be *lusores aut mimici*. The original MS. of these regulations is in the British Museum (*Cotton. MS., Vesp. F. ix*), and there the passage stands as follows, from whence it will be seen that Warton misread an important word. *Statuimus et ordinamus quod hujusmodi canonici ad recreationes admissi, non ut antea lusores aut minuti de cætero nominentur, cum denominatio non nihil insolentiæ et levitatis præ se ferre videatur*. Warton lays stress upon *mimici* as explanatory of *lusores*, which explanation is not borne out by the true reading, *minuti*. My late friend Mr. Amyot pointed out this mistake, on reference to Wilkins's *Concilia Mag. Brit. et Hib.*, iii, 687, where Wolsey's regulations are inserted at length, and where it properly stands *minuti*, as in the original manuscript.

³ The whole passage, with the translation of it printed by Berthelet, in which the words *publicus lusor* are rendered 'common player', is quoted in the *Annals of the Stage*, vol. i, p. 64.

up and acting of Miracle-plays devolved into the hands of the trading companies, each guild undertaking a portion of the performance, and sustaining a share of the expense. The authentic information regarding the exhibition of the *Corpus Christi* plays at Coventry, extends from 1416 to 1591, and during the whole of that period there is no indication that the clergy in any way co-operated.¹

The records at Chester also establish, that the whole management of these representations there was in the hands of laymen. In 1409, we learn from Stowe,² that the performance of religious plays in London was undertaken by the parish clerks; and there is, we believe, no instance of the trading companies of the metropolis having been, at any date, so employed. In Chaucer's *Miller's Tale*, which contains such repeated allusions to pieces of this description, 'Jolly Absalon', the 'parish clerk', is said to have sustained the part of Herod.³

The clergy sometimes assisted in dramatic representations, when it does not appear that they acted: in the performance of the play of *St. George* at Basingbourne, in 1511, John Hobard, 'a brotherhood priest', received 2s. 8d. for 'bearing the book', or, in other words, for filling the office

¹ Dugdale (*Hist. Warw.*, p. 216) tells us that in the reign of Henry VII these religious dramas were acted before the King 'with mighty state and reverence by the Grey-friars'. It is possible that they interfered on that occasion for the sake of more perfect exhibition.

² *Chronicle*, p. 549, edit. 1600.

³ Henry the Seventh's *Household-book*, which contains such frequent mention of 'players' of the King, of London, of Essex, of Mile-end, and of different nobility, states also that on January 1, 8 Henry VII, the King gave 20s. in reward 'to the players of Wymborne Minster'. Warton (*H. E. P.*, iii, 42, edit. 8vo.) notices the play of the *Descensus ad Inferos*, performed before the King by the *Pueri Eleemosynarii* of Hyde Abbey and St. Swithin's Priory.

of prompter.¹ Perhaps he was the author of the piece then represented.

It was provided in the Northumberland family, at the commencement of the reign of Henry VIII, that if the Earl's chaplain were also 'a maker of interludes', he was to be allowed a servant for writing out the parts;¹ and it has been seen in the *Annals of the Stage* (vol. i, p. 87), that William Peeres, who was the chaplain of the Northumberland family in 1526, was the author of an interlude, for making which he received 13s. 4d. Henry Medwall, the chaplain of Cardinal Morton (who died just before the commencement of the sixteenth century), was 'a maker of interludes', and one of his productions of this kind has survived, a very curious performance, which will be examined in its proper place.³

It is thrown out merely as a conjecture, that the introduction of Miracle-plays in various parts of this kingdom, if not in various parts of Europe, was more contemporaneous than it has been hitherto believed to have been. They were adopted at Chester within four years after the institution of the feast of *Corpus Christi* in 1264, and the same causes which led to their exhibition in that city would operate elsewhere. That the religious bodies, even in remote parts of the country, kept up a communication with other ecclesiastical establishments at home and abroad, requires no proof; and that which was the object of one must, more or less, have been the object of all. If it were considered the interest of the church that religious knowledge should to a certain degree be extended by these means, the attempt might be made in populous places simultaneously; or, supposing the

¹ Warton, *H. E. P.*, iv, 151, edit. 8vo.

² *Northumberland Household-book*, p. 44, edit. 1827.

³ 'Nature, a goodly interlude.' It was written about 1490, and printed, without any printer's name, about 1520.

experiment to have been successful in one town, the example without delay would be followed in others. The general, and sometimes particular, resemblances of these performances in distant parts of England may slightly confirm this notion. The fact would at least indicate that the pieces had a common origin, if it did not lead to the conclusion that they were introduced at a common date.

Several passages might be quoted from Chaucer's *Miller's Tale* (already referred to) to show that the knowledge of Scripture then possessed by the lower orders was derived chiefly from Miracle-plays; one of these passages alludes to an incident found, with some variations, in the Widkirk Collection, in the Chester series, and in the pageants represented at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, but not at all warranted by Scripture; and it constitutes one of the particular resemblances to which allusion has just been made: it is where Nicholas reminds the Carpenter of the quarrel between Noah and his wife, before she could be induced to enter the Ark:—

‘Hast thou not herde (qd Nicholas) also
The sorow of Noe with his feleshippe,
Or that he might gete his wife to shippe?’

In the same tale, when the carpenter speaks of ‘Christ’s Passion’, and swears by ‘him that harrowed Hell’, the terms he employs prove the popular source of his information.

An examination of the various Miracle-plays before enumerated supplies evidence, that at different periods they have been altered and interpolated; sometimes to render them more amusing, by adapting them on revival to existing manners, and sometimes for other causes, connected chiefly with the state of religion. That the Pseudo-evangelium was very early resorted to for subjects is clear from the fact, that the most ancient piece of the kind extant, before noticed, is founded upon the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus—the

'harrowing' or invading of Hell. The Widkirk Collection has been handed down to us in a comparatively pure state, and whatever transcriptions the plays may have undergone previous to the existing copy, written about the reign of Henry VI, the additions have been few. They were certainly acted after the Reformation, and some doctrinal passages, regarding the seven sacraments and transubstantiation, were then omitted.¹ The series next in point of antiquity, as far as the age of the manuscript is concerned—the *Ludus Coventrie*—has many comparative modernizations, which are also to be found, though not to the same extent, in the Chester Whitsun plays. Each succeeding transcriber seems to have taken liberties with the text, and as in some cases they followed the ancient mode of spelling, and in others adopted that which was employed when they lived, the Chester series affords specimens of orthography of different ages, from the middle of the fourteenth to the beginning of the seventeenth century.²

It remains to speak briefly of the mechanical contrivances for the representation of Miracle-plays.

They were acted on temporary erections of timber, indifferently called scaffolds, stages and pageants;³ and there is no doubt that in some instances they were placed upon wheels, in order that they might be removed to various quarters of large towns or cities, and the plays exhibited in

¹ These passages are cancelled with red ink, but are still very legible: opposite one of them in the margin, and in a hand-writing perhaps of the reign of Edward VI, are the words 'corrected and not played'.

² Mr. Sharp, in his *Dissertation*, has published a Coventry Miracle-play, from a transcript made by one Robert Croo, in 1534, who professes that it is 'newly correcte'.

³ Scaffold and Stage we have from the old French *Eschafaud* and *Estage*; but the etymology of pageant is by no means so clear. Mr. Sharp, in his *Dissertation*, refers to all the authorities on the subject,

succession.¹ The testimony of Archdeacon Rogers, who wrote his account of Chester prior to the death of Elizabeth, seems decisive upon this point, as far as the performances there are concerned: he says that the scaffold consisted of two rooms, a higher and a lower: in the lower, the performers attired themselves, and in the higher they acted; which was open at the top, in order that all might be able to see the exhibition.² The same authority would lead to the conclusion, that only one scaffold, stage, or pageant, was present at the same time in the same place, and doubtless such was the fact, according to the arrangement of the plays to which Archdeacon Rogers refers. It is indisputable, however, that the Chester Miracle-plays, as they exist in the British Museum, could not have been so represented. Some of the pieces require the employment of two, and even of three scaffolds, independent of other contrivances: the street also must

and arrives at the conclusion, that Pageant is derived from the Greek *πηγυμμι*, in consequence of the pieces of timber of which it is composed being compacted together. The plays themselves were often called pageants, from the elevations on which they were exhibited.

¹ The scaffold, or at least the frame on wheels, on which it used to be placed, seems at a later date to have had the name of the *carriage*. By a MS. among the second Randle Holme's *Collections* in the British Museum, it appears that 'at an assembly holden in the Common Hall of Pleas' in Chester, the Tailors' company had leave to build upon a piece of ground where their 'carriage-house' formerly stood. This was in 1631, and it is one of the latest and faintest traces regarding Miracle-plays in England.

² See Malone's *Shakespeare by Boswell*, iii, 335. It is to be observed, that Mr. Sharp, in his work on the Coventry plays, adds a covering to the stage. Sometimes this lower room seems to have been employed to represent Hell, the Devils rising out of or falling into it. *MS. Digby*, 133, in the Bodleian, is the Miracle-play of *Mary Magdalen's Repentance*, and one of the stage directions in it is the following:—'Here enters the Prynse of the Devylls in a stage, with hell onderneath the stage.'

have been used, as several of the characters enter and go out on horseback.¹

The same remark will apply both to the Widkirk Collection of plays, and to those in the volume called *Ludus Coventriæ*: in the latter, indeed, 'the place', and 'the mid place', are mentioned as the scene of part of the action; and there can be no doubt, from the terms of some of the stage directions, that two, three, and even four scaffolds were erected round a centre, the performers proceeding, as occasion required, from one to the other across 'the mid place'.² Without entering more at large into this point, which will be illustrated in the course of the examination of the productions themselves, it may be observed, that in one Widkirk play Cain is exhibited at plough with a team of horses; and in another it is absolutely necessary for the story, that something like the interior of a cottage should be represented, with a peasant's wife in bed, who pretends to have been just delivered of a child, which lies by her side in a cradle. The *castella picta*, enumerated among the properties of the fraternity of *Corpus Christi* at York, were probably, as before remarked, ornamented scaffolds, employed in the exhibition

¹ Strutt (*Manners and Customs*, iii, 130) says that the early stage consisted of 'three several platforms or stages raised one above another'. According to the *Histoire du Théâtre Français* (Paris, 1745, ii, 290), this was the contrivance sometimes resorted to abroad. When *Le Mystère de la Passion* was played at Antwerp, in 1486, 'Le Théâtre étoit construit au bas des Halles. Il y avoit cinq Eschafauds à plusieurs étages, couverts d'ardoises: le Paradis, qui étoit le plus élevé, contenoit deux étages.' When it had previously been performed on the plain of Veximiel, there were nine stages 'de haut, ency comme degrés'. (*Ibid.* ii, 285.)

² This must also have been the case in the exhibition of the *Digby* Miracle-play of *Mary Magdalen*, in which a castle and a ship were introduced, as will be seen hereafter. The 'place', termed *placea*, and a *mons*, are also mentioned in the stage directions.

of the Miracle-plays of that city in the commencement of the fifteenth century.

In the following pages, a synoptical and comparative view is attempted of the three sets of Miracle-plays already enumerated, in order to show the manner in which the same subject was treated in different parts of the kingdom. This plan affords, also, the opportunity of pointing out such alterations as appear to have taken place at various dates ; proceeding upon the not unlikely supposition, that Miracle-plays were originally introduced into the populous districts of the kingdom nearly contemporaneously.

THE
WIDKIRK, CHESTER, AND COVENTRY
MIRACLE-PLAYS.

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE PLAYS.

THE Widkirk Miracle-plays, as they have come down to us, are without any introductory matter.

The Chester Whitsun plays are preceded by a kind of proclamation (called 'the Banes', or Banns), which was made by certain Vexillators, or Standard-bearers, in various parts of the city on St. George's day, before the commencement of the performances. It goes through the subjects of the whole series of plays, attributes the authorship to 'Don Rondall, a monk of Chester Abbey', and excuses the introduction of 'some things, not warranted by any writ', on the ground that it was done 'to make sport', and to 'glad the hearers'.¹ The following stanza seems to prove that 'the Banes' were written not long after the completion of the Reformation.

'As all that shall see them shall most welcome be,
Soe all that here them, wee moste humblie praye,
Not to compare this matter or storie

¹ *Harl. MS.*, No. 1944, is a copy of Archdeacon Rogers's collections regarding Chester, which contains a curious addition to this introduction. An excuse is there made for 'the crafts-men' by whom the plays were to be represented, who were not so well qualified as the 'players of price', who might have been employed. It shows also, as might be proved from many authorities, that formerly those who played God usually had 'the

With the age or tyme wherein we presentlye staye,
 But in the tyme of ignorance wherein we did straye:
 Then do I compare, that this lande through out,
 Non had the like, nor the like dose sett out.'

The Chester-plays began on Whit-Monday, and continued until Wednesday.

By a similar proclamation, which also details the subjects of all the forty plays in the volume called *Ludus Coventriæ*, it appears, that the plays began on a Sunday, at six in the morning; and that they were acted at other places besides Coventry is to be concluded from the fact, that the letter N is placed for the *Nomen* of the town, which was to be filled up, as occasion required, by the person making the proclamation. It is addressed to 'gentles and yeomanry', and, contrary to 'the Banes' at Chester, it asserts that no 'fables' are intermixed with 'holy writ'.—The conclusion is as follows:

'Now have we told yow, all be dene,¹
 The hool mater that we thynke to play:
 Whan that ye come ther shall ye sene
 This game wel pleyd in good aray.
 Of holy wrytte this game shall bene,
 And of no fablys be no way.

face gilt'; and it requests, that as this gilding 'disfigured the man', the omission of the Deity might be pardoned, and that the audience would not expect God 'to appear in shape or person', but in 'a cloudy covering'. Whatever might be the particular nature of these performances at that time, it is clear that they took place within some building, for those who did not approve them were desired to withdraw, as 'open is the doore'.

In Mr. Sharp's work on the Coventry plays is an entry under the date of 1490, of 'a cheverel gyld for Ihe', meaning a gilt beard for Jesus'. In one of the Moral plays formerly in the Collection of Dr. Cox Macro, and then in that of Mr. Hudson Gurney, *Wisdom* is introduced as a character, with his hair and beard gilt and curled.

¹ *be dene*—i. e., obediently.

Now god them save from trey and tene,¹
 For us that prayth upon that day,
 And qwyte them wel ther mede.
 A Sunday next, yf that we may,
 At vj of the belle we gynne oure play
 In N. town; wherfor we pray
 That god now be youre spede.'

CREATION OF THE WORLD.—REBELLION OF LUCIFER.—
 DEATH OF ABEL.

THE first Play, or Pageant, of the Widkirk collection includes the Creation, with the rebellion and expulsion of Lucifer and his adherents. The Deity thus commences. Widkirk
Plays.

'Ego sum alpha et o:
 I am the first the last also;
 Oone god in majestie,
 Mervelus of myght most,
 Fader and son and holy goost,
 On[e] god in trinyte.'

The work of creation is then begun, and after the cherubim have sung, the Deity descends from his throne and goes out: Lucifer usurps it, and asks the angels

'Gay felows, how semys now me?'

The good and bad angels disagree as to his appearance: but the dispute is terminated by the return of the Deity, who expels Satan and his adherents from Heaven. Adam and Eve are then created in Paradise, and this piece ends with a speech from Satan, lamenting their felicity. Of the temptation and fall of man we hear nothing, the second play re-

¹ Treachery and sorrow.

lating to the murder of Abel. It is opened by Cain's ploughboy, called *Garçon*, with a sort of prologue, in which, among other things, he warns the spectators to be silent. It commences thus:—

'All hayll, all hayll, both blithe and glad,
For here com I, a mery lad.
Be peasse youre dyn, my masters bad,
Or els the devill you spede.
Felowes, here I you forbede
To make nother no[i]se ne cry:
Whoso is so hardy to do that dede,
The devill hang hym up to dry.'

Cain enters with a plough and team, one of his mares being named 'Donnyng': he quarrels with the *Garçon*, because he will not drive for him; after which Abel arrives, and wishes that 'God may speed Cain, and his man'.—Cain replies unceremoniously, desiring his brother, in plain terms, to kiss the least honourable part of his person. The murder afterwards takes place, and Cain hides himself:—

'*Deus.* Cayn, Cayn!
Cayn. Who is that callis me?
I am yonder, may thou not se.
Deus. Cayn, where is thy brother Abell?
Cayn. What asks thou me?—I trow, in hell;
At hell, I trow, he be:
Who so were ther then myght he se.'

Cain, having been cursed, calls the boy, and beats him 'but to use his hand': he acknowledges that he has slain his brother, and the boy advises running away, lest 'the bayles us take'. This is followed by some gross buffoonery, Cain making a mock proclamation 'in the King's name', and the boy repeating it blunderingly after him. Cain sends him away with the plough and horses, and ends the pageant with

a speech to the spectators, bidding them farewell for ever, before he goes to the devil. This brings us, in the Widkirk-plays, to Noah's flood.

The two earlier plays of the Chester series are occupied with the same period and incidents of Scripture Chester history. The first opens with a long speech from Plays. the Deity, asserting his power and glory, in alliterative rhyme, and calling himself,

'Prince principall proved in my perpetuall provydence.'

The rebellion of Lucifer occurs before the creation of the world, the chief adherent of the Devil being a fiend named 'Light-burne'. After they are expelled, we hear of another companion of Lucifer, called 'Ruffyn'; and, in a dialogue between them, they resolve 'to make mankinde to doe amisse', before in fact man has been formed. The second pageant comprises the creation, and the temptation¹ and fall: after this event the direction in the margin is, that Adam and Eve shall cover *genitalia sua cum foliis*, whereas until then *stabunt nudi, et non verecundabuntur*. They are driven out of Paradise, Abel is killed, and Cain cursed. During this piece, 'mynstrells playinge' is noted in the margin four times, in order to relieve its tediousness, as it is not enlivened by any comic speech or incident.

The same events are included in the first two of the Coventry plays:² the rebellion of the angels, the Coventry creation, the temptation, and the fall of man, follow Plays.

¹ The stage-direction before the temptation is, 'then the serpent shall come up out of a hole'; and the devil is described as 'walking' near Adam and Eve at the same time.

² In the old copy there is some error in numbering the Pageants, the second being numbered 3. Probably the first, which is long, was originally divided.

each other. When the Deity asks the Devil why he seduced Adam and Eve? Satan replies:—

‘I shall the[e] sey wherffor and why
I dede hem all this velony;
For I am ful of gret envy,
Of wroth and wyckyd hate,
That man shulde leve above the skye,
Where as sum tyme dwellyd I,
And now I am cast to helle sty,
Streyte out at hevyn gate.’

Cain’s sacrifice not being accepted, he exclaims—

‘What ! thou stynkyng losel, and is it so ?
Doth god the love, and hatyht me ?
Thou shalt be ded—I shall the slo :
Thi Lord, thi god, thou shalt nevyr se.’

After the murder, *Deus* says:—

‘Cayn, come forth and answer me :
Asoyle my qwestyon anon ryght.
Thy brother Abel wher now is he ?
Ha done, and answere me as tyght.¹
‘*Cayn.*—My brother’s keper [w]ho made me ?
Syn whan was I his kepyng knyght ?
I kan not telle wher that he be,’ etc.

This Pageant, like those of Widkirk and Chester, ends with the malediction of Cain, who exclaims:—

‘Alas, alas ! whedyr may I go ?
I dare never se man in the vesage :
I am woundyn as a wreche in wo,
And cursyd of God for my falsage :
Unprofytabyll and vayn also
In felde and towne, in strete and stage ;
I may nevyr make merthe mo.’

¹ Directly.

NOAH'S FLOOD.

The third Widkirk Pageant is entitled *Processus Noe cum filiis*. After Noah has lamented the sinfulness of the world, God is introduced repenting that he had created mankind, instructing Noah how to build the ark, and blessing him and 'his fry'. Noah's wife is of a very quarrelsome disposition, and they have a contest in the commencement, in which both swear by the Virgin Mary: her complaint is, that her husband does no work for his family; and he soon afterwards sets about the Ark, which is completed on the spot *in nomine patris, et filii, et spiritus sancti*. He then warns his wife of what is about to happen, and invites her to seek shelter on board:—

Noe.—Raine as it is skill,¹
Here must us abide grace :
Therfor, wife, with good will
Come into this place.

Uxor.—Sir, for Jak nor for Gill,
Will I turn my face,
Till I have on this hill
Spon a space
On my rok.
Well were he might get me :
Now will I downe set me,
Yet reede I no man let me,²
For drede of a knok.

Noe.—Behold to the heven !
The cataractes all
They are open, full even
Grete and small ;
And the planets seven
Left has their stall.

¹ As it may or will.

² Yet I advise no man to hinder me.

Thise thoners and levyn
 Down gar² fall
 Full stout,
 Both halles and bowers,
 Castels and towres.³
 Full sharpe are thise showers
 That renys⁴ aboute ;
 Wherfor wife have done,
 Come into ship fast.

Uxor.—Yei, Noe, go cloute thy shone,⁵
 The better will thai last.'

The wives of their sons intercede in vain, and Noah is at last obliged to threaten his wife with the whip.

'*Noe.*—In fayth, for youre long tarying
 You shall lik on the whip.⁶

Uxor.—Spare me not, I pray the ;
 Bot even, as thou thynk,
 Thise grete words shall not flay me.

Noe.—Abide, dame, and drynk,
 For betyn shalt thou be
 With this staf to⁷ thou stynk.
 Are stroks good, say me?'

They then begin a personal conflict, the wife not taking her castigation at all patiently : she, however, gets the worst of it, and wishes her own husband dead, and the same good luck to all the wives among the spectators : Noah, on the other

¹ Thunders and lightning.

² Make.

³ Noah's description in prose of the falling flood is by no means unpoetical:—'Behold the heavens ! All the cataracts, both great and small are open, and the seven planets have quitted their stations. Thunders and lightning strike down the strong halls and bowers, castles and towers.'

⁴ Run.

⁵ Go nail thy shoes.

⁶ Lick or taste of the whip.

⁷ Till.

hand, warns all husbands to chastise their wives before they become too headstrong. The matter is accorded by the intervention of the sons, and ultimately they all go on board the ark: three hundred and fifty days are said to pass while Noah and his family are conversing in the rain. A raven, and then a dove, are sent out, and the play ends with the debarkation of all the passengers, human and bestial.

In the Chester pageant on the same subject, the building of the Ark occupies 'one hundred winters and twenty', Chester and the following direction shows that some art was Plays. employed in the getting up of the representation:—'Then Noy shall goe into the Arke with all his famylye, his wife excepte: the Arke must be borded rounde about, and on the bordes all the beastes and fowles here after rehearsed must be painted, that there wordes may agree with the pictures.'

Noah's wife has all along declared that she will not make one of the party, and when at last Noah warns her, that if she does not come she will be drowned, she replies that she will not go on board without her female friends:—

'But I have my gossippes every eichone,¹
One foote further I will not gone.
The[y] shall not drowne, by saint John,
And I maye save there life.
The[y] loven me full well, by Christe !
But thou lett them into thy cheiste ;
Elles rowe nowe wher'thy leiste,
And gette the a newe wiffe.'

Shem intercedes with his mother in vain, for she tells him,

'Sem, goe againe to him ; I say,
I will not come therein to day.
Noe.—Come in, wife, in twenty devills way,
Or else stande there all day.'

¹ *Every eichone* is *everich one*, or every one.

The ladies all refuse, and sing what is called *The good Gossippes Song*, which is not given, but the speech of one of them ends thus :—

‘ Here is a potill full of Malmsee full strong,
It will reioyce both harte and tonge :
Though Noe thinke us never so longe,
Here will we drinke alike.’

Japhet and Shem at last force her into the Ark. Noah, willing to be reconciled, welcomes her ; but she strikes him, exclaiming, ‘ Have thou that for thy note.’ The conclusion of the pageant is the covenant of the rainbow, and the Deity takes leave of Noah with ‘ now farewell, my darling deare.’

The Coventry play on the same subject is without the incident of the quarrel between Noah and his wife : on the contrary, she is very glad to escape, and says :—

‘ Alas, for gret ruthe of this gret vengeaunce,
Gret doyl¹ it is to se this watyr so wyde,
But yit thankyd be god of this ordenaunce,
That we be now savyd on lyve to abyde.’²

¹ Sorrow, or dole.

² In the pageant preserved in the appendix to Brand’s *History of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, a dispute between Noah and his wife is also introduced, but with more art and circumstance. When the Patriarch has built the Ark, the Devil tries to prevail upon Noah’s wife not to enter it, observing,

‘ I swear thee, by my crooked snout,
All that thy husband goes about
Is little for thy profit :’

and then he gives her a poisonous draught for her husband, which he himself tastes, but spits out. She tells her husband :

‘ By my faith, I no reck
Whether thou be friend or foe :
The Devil of hell thee speed,
To ship when thou shalt go.’

Noah is so provoked, that he belabours her lustily, while she does not

The death of Cain, by 'a broad arrōw', shot by blind Lamech, who mistook Cain for a wild beast, forms an incident in the fourth Coventry pageant.

ABRAHAM AND ISAAC.

The fourth Widkirk pageant relates entirely to the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham. The father and son, perhaps in order to give business to the scene, are accompanied on their way 'forth of towne', by two boys and a jackass, whom, before the sacrifice, they leave behind. When Abraham is about to slay his son, Isaac exclaims :—

'The shynyng of your bright blade,
It gars me quake for ferde to dee.

Abraham.—Therfor groflyng¹ thou shalt be layde ;
Then when I stryke thou shal not se.'

In order to delay the fatal stroke, Abraham pretends that he has lost something, and turning away, says very tenderly :

'What water shotes in both myn eeyn !
I were lever than all warldly wyn,
That I had fon hym onys unkynde ;
But no defawt I found hym in.
I wold be dede for hym or pynde ;
To slo hym thus I thynk grete syn :'

or in other words, 'What water shoots into both mine eyes? I should have been more glad than of all worldly gain, if I had found him once unkind ; but I never found him in fault.

seem able to afford much resistance. At the conclusion, an Angel appears and congratulates Noah on his victory. When they are all on board, the Devil pronounces a curse upon the spectators, which ends the performance.

¹ *Grovelling*, on his stomach. The meaning of the preceding line is, 'It makes me quake for fear to die'.

I would willingly die or endure suffering for him: to slay him thus I think a great sin.'

The angel prevents the blow; but Abraham will not talk, even with the heavenly messenger, till he has released and kissed his son.

The Chester play treats this story even more pathetically; but, as a contrast, it is opened with a comic prologue by Plays. a person who names himself 'Gobbet on the Green', but who is called *Preco* at the head of the scene. It runs thus:

'All lordinges that be here presente,
And harken me with good entente
Howe Noye awaie from us wente,
And all his companye;
And Abraham, through Godes grace,
He is comen into this place,
And ye will geve us rombe and space
To tell you of storye.
This playe, for south, begyne shall be
In worshippe of the Trinitie,
That you maye all heare and see
That shalbe done to daie.
My name is Gobbet on the greene;
With you I may no longer bene.
Farewell, my lordinges, by dene,
For letting of your playe.'¹

The following is part of the dialogue between Abraham and terrified Isaac:—

'*Isaacke*.—Yf I have tresspassed in any degree,
With a yarde you may beate me.

¹ The stage-direction, which immediately succeeds, shows that this speech was intended as a prologue, 'Here Abraham, haveinge restored his brother Loth into his owne place, doth first *begyne the playe*, sayinge,' etc.

Put up your sworde, yf your wilbe,
For I ame but a chylde.

Abraham.—Oh, my dear sonne ! I ame sorye
To doe to thee this greate anoye.
God's commaundement doe must I :
His workes are aye full mylde.

Isaacke.—Woulde God, my mother were here with me !
She woulde kneele downe upon her knee,
Prayinge you, father, yf yt might be,
For to save my life.'

Isaac nevertheless expresses his readiness to submit, and reminds Abraham that he has other sons at home whom he may love. Abraham 'wrings his hands', and declares himself almost out of his senses for grief. Isaac on his knees asks his father's blessing, and requests him to hide his eyes that he may not see the sword when it is raised to strike him, while Abraham entreats him not to add to his agony, and calls upon Christ to have pity upon him. The stage direction at the close is : 'Here let Abraham make a signe, as though he would slaye and cut off his head with his sworde ; then let the Angell come and take the sworde by the ende, and staye it.'

In the course of this piece we meet with the first mention of the *Expositor* (sometimes also called the *Doctor*), who makes several explanatory addresses to the audience ; and a messenger delivers an epilogue, in which he announces the subject of the next play.

The Coventry Pageant, which relates, like those of Widdkirk and Chester, solely to the sacrifice of Isaac, is much inferior. There is one natural touch in it, however, which deserves notice : during the whole way Abraham is dumb with grief at the contemplation of the sacrifice he is compelled to make ; and Isaac remarks unconsciously and innocently :—

Coventry
Plays.

'Fayre fadyr, ye go ryght styлле :
I pray you, fadyr, speke unto me.'

JACOB AND ESAU—PROPHECIES OF THE MESSIAH—PLAGUES
OF EGYPT—MOSES—BALAK AND BALAAM—THE TEN
TABLES.

The fifth, sixth, and seventh Pageants of the Widkirk series may be dismissed briefly, and they conclude that portion which is devoted to the Old Testament. The fifth is occupied by the story of Jacob and Esau, and is imperfect: the sixth is called *Processus Prophetarum*, in which Moses, David, Daniel, Sybilla, etc., announce the coming of the Saviour. The seventh is a play peculiar to this collection, and relates to the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. After a long conference between the Deity and Moses, the latter works the miracle before Pharaoh of the conversion of his rod into a serpent. Pharaoh exclaims,

'A, ha, dog, the devyll thee drowne !'

and Moses takes the serpent by the tail, saying,

'Lo, Sir, behold.'

Pharao.—'With ylahayl.

Certes, this is a sotell swayn.¹

It is followed by the departure of Moses and 'his meyney'; and *hic pertransient mare* is the stage direction. Pharaoh and his host 'pursuing them' are supposed to be drowned in the Red Sea, the last words of the King being :

'Heyf up your hertes unto Mahownde,
He will be nere us in our nede.—
Help ! the raggyd devyll ! we drowne !
Now mon we pay for all our dede.'

¹ Evil, or ill hail. Certainly this is a *cunning fellow*.

Moses concludes the play in the following lines :—

‘ Heven, thou attend, I say, in syght,
And erth, my wordys here what I tell.
As rayn or dew on erth doys lyght,
And waters herbys and trees full well,
Gyf lovyng to godds majeste.
Hys dedys ar done, hys ways are trew :
Honowred be he in trynyte,
To hym be honoure and vertew.’

In the course of this piece, the seven plagues are represented falling upon the Egyptians, and when the people express their sufferings, Pharaoh answers them,

‘ What raggyd, the devyll of hell, alys you so to cry?’

In the Chester Play relating to Balaam and his Ass we meet with the following very noticeable stage-directions; how the transformation was contrived we have no means of knowing: *Tunc percutiet Balaham asinam suam, et nota quod hic oportet aliquis transformari in speciem asinæ, et quando Balaham percutit dicat asina,*

‘ Maister, thou dost eville, sickerly,
So good an asse as me to nye :
Now hast thou beaten me heare thrye
That bare thee thus aboute.’

In the Chester series, the fifth is the last play which relates to the Old Testament; and it is headed *De Mose, et Rege Balaak, et Balaam*. In the course of it King Balak swears by Mars :—

‘ Therefore my god, and godes all,
O mighty Marse, on thee I call,
With all the powers infernall,
Rise now, and helpe at neede !’

Chester
Plays.

At the termination are the following lines, proving that the five pageants of the Old Testament occupied the first day's exhibition at Chester.

'Nowe, worthy sires, bouth greate and small,
You have we shewed this storye before;
And yf yt be pleasinge to you all,
To morrowe nexte you shall have more.'

In the *Ludus Coventriæ*, the last piece strictly belonging to Coventry the Old Testament is the sixth; but perhaps the Plays. seventh, which is merely a deduction of the genealogy of Christ from David, may be included. The sixth is occupied by the delivery of the ten Tables to Moses, who explains and enforces all the commandments in succession, and ends with these two lines:

'Fare well, gode frendys, for hens wyll I wende:
My tale I have taught yow, my wey now I goo.'

Thus we see, that seven pageants of the Widkirk collection, five of the Chester series, and seven of the volume called *Ludus Coventriæ*, apply to events of the Old Testament.

THE SALUTATION.—CONCEPTION, AND BIRTH OF CHRIST.

Augustus Cæsar opens the eighth Widkirk pageant with a Widkirk long speech, commanding silence, and swearing 'by Plays. Mahownde', that he will kill on the spot every one who makes the least noise. He then imposes what is called the 'head-penny', and in the course of the action a messenger goes to and returns from Judea. The *annunciatio* follows, forming the ninth play, and the Deity declares the reasons why his son 'takes manhood'.—Gabriel salutes the Virgin with,

'Hayll, Mary, graciouse,
Hayll, madyn, and god's spouse,
Unto the I lowte.¹

¹ i. e., Bow: a *lowt* is a bowing clown.

Of all vȳrgyns thou art qwene,
That ever was or shall be seyn,
Withouten dowte.
Hayll, Mary ! and well thow be,
My lord of heven is wyth the.'

Joseph, arriving soon afterwards, finds Mary pregnant, and laments 'that ever I wed so young a wife'. The following lines are part of his speech to Elizabeth :—

'Alas ! alas ! and woe's me !
Who hath made her with childe ?
Well I wiste an ould man and a maye
Might not accorde by no waye :
Nor manye wynters might I not plaie,
Nor worke no workes wylde.
Three monthes she has bene from me ;
Nowe has she gotten here, as I see,
A great bellye, like to thee,
Since shee went awaie :
And mine it is not, be thou bolde,
For I am both ould and coulde.'

Mary asserts that 'the God of Heaven' is father of her child : Joseph utterly disbelieves her, and declares, that he 'will not father it' ; but the Angel descends, and convinces him at once of the Virgin's innocence and purity. Joseph then humbly apologises for his unjust suspicions :—

'But I wote well, my leman fre,
I have trespass to god and the :
Forgyf me, I the pray.'

She immediately consents to pardon him for his doubts. In this pageant the Angel has informed the Virgin that Elizabeth also is pregnant, and in the next, which is very short, Mary and Joseph pay a visit to Elizabeth. This brings us to the *Pagina Pastorum*, which is the tenth of the Widkirk series.

The sixth pageant of the Chester Miracle-plays is entitled
 Chester *De Salutatione et nativitate Salvatoris*, and here we
 Plays. meet with the subsequent stanzas in French, as a part
 of a speech by Augustus Cæsar, here called *Octavianus*.

‘ Seigneurs tous si assembles,
 Ames proles estates,
 Jey posse faire larment et leez,
 Et metten en languore :
 Vous toutes si prest ne sortes
 De fayre intentes mavolentes,
 Car Ihesu souveraigne bene sages
 Et demaund Emperour.
 ‘ Jay si personne mille si able,
 Jey su tent faire et beable
 En tresarois ne tresagait
 Mes de toile plerunt,
 Destret et sage su en counsell
 A mi on dame et on prsel,
 Declare sake et mater frail
 Un teel nest pas unmaine.’¹

It is not easy, after the corruptions of, perhaps, between three and four centuries, during which this passage had been handed down from transcript to transcript, to make much sense out of it ; but it seems to be a declaration on the part of Augustus, of his power, wealth, and personal perfections, which quite falls in with the usual course on such occasions. We take it to have been a portion of the *French original* of this performance. Augustus sends a boy into Judea, to obtain a penny each from the inhabitants, telling him to take ‘the highe horse beside Boughton’ for his journey. Boughton,

¹ These lines are taken from *Harl. MS.* No. 2124, which is not that usually followed in the extracts already made. In *Harl. MS.* No. 2013, only the first stanza is inserted, and that as prose.

near Chester, was the place of execution, and by the 'high horse' there, Augustus, probably, means the gallows.¹ The boy must nevertheless have been really mounted at the time, for he replies satirically :—

'Graunt mercy, lord, pardy,
This hackney will well serve me;
For a great lord of your degree
Should ryde in such araye.'

The birth of the Saviour in this pageant is supposed to take place on the stage: Joseph brings in the midwives, and Mary observes :—

'Sir, they be welcome withouten were;²
But god will worke of his power
Full soone for me, my lefe fere,³
As best is now and aye.

Tunc paululum acquiescunt.

¹ This passage, and the reply, are found only in *Harl. MS.* 2124. Ulpian Fulwell, in his *Like will to Like*, 1568, calls the gallows a 'two legged mare'.

'This peece of land, whereto you inheritours are,
Is called the land of the *two legged mare*:
In this peece of ground there is a mare in deed,
Which is the quickest mare in England for speede.'

The anonymous author of a poem, written in the reign of Queen Mary, called *Pore Help*, has the same allusion :—

'And are you now so bragg?
You may come to tagg,
Your hap may be to wagg
Upon a *wooden nagg*;
Or els a fair fyre
May happ to be your hyre.'

The whole is reprinted by Strype, *Eccl. Mem.*, ii, Rep. of Orig., 34. There was, however, a different sort of punishment at that date, called riding the wooden horse, or *riding the staag*.

² Dispute.

³ Dear companion.

A, Josephe, tydinges a righte !
 I have a sonne, a sweete wight.—
 Lord ! thanked be thou, moch of might,
 For proved is thy postee.¹

Joseph is thoroughly satisfied, and the pageant ends.

The Coventry plays, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15, all relating to matters connected with the birth of the Saviour, much of which is not contained in any other series, deserve very particular notice. In the first of these a personage, called *Contemplation*, is brought forward, who subsequently acts as Prologue-speaker, and explains and moralizes on the events, but is in no way concerned in the action. This is an allegorical impersonation, and there can be no doubt that it was introduced into these performances considerably after their first production, whether they were in French or English.

The following is part of his first speech, justifying the ordination of Priests, Bishops, and a Pope :—

‘Sovereynes, undyrstandyth, that Kynge David here
 Ordeyned foure and twenty prestys of gret devocion,
 In the temple of God ; after here let apere,
 Thei weryn clepyd *summi sacerdotes* for mynistracion ;
 And one was prynce of prestys, havynge domynation :
 Amonge whiche was an old prest clepyd Zakarye ;
 And he had an olde woman to his wyff, of holy conversation,
 Which hyth Elizabeth, that never had childe verilye.’

The eighth play refers chiefly to the barrenness of Anna, and the promised birth of the Virgin. The following is part of the address of *Contemplation* in opening the ninth play.

‘Sovereynes, ye hav sen shewyd yow before,
 Of Joachym and Anna here both there holy metynge :
 How our lady was conseyyd, and how she was bore.

¹ Power.

We passe ovyr that, breffnes of tyme consýnderynge,
And how our lady, in her tendyr age and ying,
Into the temple was offryd,' etc.

The presentation then takes place in dumb show, *Contemplation* commenting upon what passes. The Virgin is represented as a child of three years old in the ninth play, and we are informed by *Contemplation* that fourteen years are supposed to elapse between that and the tenth play—so little were the unities attended to even in the very earliest of our theatrical performances. *Contemplation's* epilogue ends in these lines :—

'Hath pacyens with us, we besech yow here,
And in short spas
The parlement of hefne¹ sone shal ye se,
And how goddys sone come man shal he,
And how the salutation after shal be
Be goddys holy gras.'

The Parliament of Heaven is not opened in the next play (the tenth), which is founded upon that part of the apocryphal gospel called 'Mary'. The Bishop summons the males of the kindred of David to appear in the temple, each bearing a peeled white rod, it being declared from heaven, that he whose rod should 'bloom and bear', should be the husband of the Virgin. Joseph is pointed out by the miracle, and he is most reluctantly married, declaring,

'An olde man may nevyr thryff
With a yonge wyff, so god me save.....
If I her chyde she wolde clowte my cote,
Blere myne ey, and pyke out a mote ;
And thus oftyn tymes it is sene.'

The Bishop, however, is positive as regards the marriage, and at last Joseph gives way :—

¹ Heaven.

'Agens my God not do I may :
 Her wardeyn and keper wyl I ever be.—
 But, fayr mayden, I thee pray,
 Kepe thee clene, as I shall me.
 I am a man of age,
 Therefore, ser Busshop, I wyl that ye wete,
 That in bed we shal nevyr mete ;
 For, iwys, mayden swete,
 An olde man may not rage.'

Nevertheless, the marriage is solemnized, and *hic content Benedicta sit beata Trinitas.*

When, during the marriage ceremony, Joseph is asked, 'whether he will have this maiden', he replies with great simplicity,

'Nay, sere, so mote I thryff,
 I have right no nede therto ;'

but they are united notwithstanding. Joseph resolves that he will not live with Mary, and she makes a vow of chastity. During the piece, he goes out and hires 'a lytyl praty hous' for her residence. The progress of the incidents is interrupted by *the Parliament of Heaven*, in the eleventh pageant, in which the Father, Son, Veritas, Justitia, Misericordia, Pax and Spiritus Sanctus are the speakers. Gabriel then descends, and salutes Mary with an anagrammatic pun :

'Heyl ful of grace, god is with the !
 Amonge all women blyssyd art thou ;
 Here this name Eva is turnyd Ave,
 That is to say, with owte sorwe¹ Av ye now.'

The following singular stage direction just subsequently occurs—'Here the holygost disecendit, with 3 bennys² to our lady: the sone of the godhed next, with 3 bennys to the holygost: the fadyr godly, with 3 bennys to the sone: and

¹ Sorrow.

² *Benedicites.*

so entre all thre to here bosom'. The twelfth play opens very dramatically, with the return of Joseph to his 'pretty little house', after a supposed absence of some months.

Joseph.—How, dame, how ! undo youre dore undo.
Are ye at home ? Why speke ye noht ?

Susanna.—Who is ther ? Why cry ye so ?
Tell us youre herand. Wyl ye ought ?

Joseph.—Undo your dore, I sey yow to,
For to com in is all my thought.

Maria.—It is my spowse that spekyth us to.
Ondo the dore, his wyl were wrought.—
Well come hom, myn husbond dere,
How have ye ferd in fer countre ?

Joseph.—To gete oure levynge, withowtyn were,
I have sore laboryd for the[e] and me.'

Afterwards he suddenly discovers the pregnancy of the Virgin, and exclaims in great grief :—

'Alas, alas ! my name is shent !
All men may me now dyspyse,
And seyn, Olde cokwold, thi bowe is bent
Newly now, after the Frensche gyse ;'

a remarkable expression that seems to have been proverbial.

The descent of an angel explains the whole matter, greatly to Joseph's satisfaction ; and, as in the Widkirk play, he makes suitable amends. The thirteenth play consists of the visit of Joseph and Mary to Elizabeth, with some interlocutions by *Contemplation* : the conclusion of it only is curious, as an officer of the Bishop's court summons a great number of persons to appear before his Lordship, at the trial of Joseph and Mary—all of them with English names, obviously inserted for the sake of producing merriment among the spectators.

‘I warne you here all a bowte,
 That I somown you, all the rowte :
 Loke ye fayl for no dowte
 At the court to pere :
 Both John Jurdon and Geffrey Gyle,
 Malkyn Mylkedoke and fayr Mabye,
 Stevyn Sturdy and Jak at the style,
 And Saw[n]dyr sadelere.’

The most remarkable part of the address, however, is the information, near the close, that money was collected for the performances :—

‘And loke ye rynge wele in your purs,
 For ellys your cawse may spede the wurs,
 Thow that ye flynge goddys curs
 Evyn at myn hede.’

In the fourteenth Pageant of the *Ludus Coventriæ* Mary is brought to trial before Ahizachar, the Bishop, for infidelity, and Joseph for tamely submitting to it. Their accusers are two more allegorical impersonations, whose qualities are indicated by being called *Primus et Secundus Detractor*. The foundation of this piece is in the Pseudo-evangelium. The purity of Joseph is established by his drinking, without any ill effect, a liquid which, were he guilty, would produce ‘some maculation plain on his face’: Mary offers to go through the same purgation, declaring ‘I trespacyd nevyr with erthly wyght’; on which *Primus Detractor* observes :—

‘In feyth, I suppose, that this woman slepte
 Withowtyn all coverte, whyle that it dede snowe,
 And a flake therof into hyre mowthe crepte,
 And therof the chylde in hyre wombe doth growe.’

Secundus Detractor, following up the joke, warns Mary to take care, when the snow-child is born, not to let the sun melt it.

The Virgin, like Joseph, drinks without any change in her appearance; and *Primus Detractor*, asserting that Ahizachar had purposely changed the draught, is compelled by the Bishop to swallow what is left; and he is thus suddenly and fatally converted from his unbelief.

An incident in the fifteenth Coventry play is the same as is found in the Christmas Carol, yet often sung. Mary, seeing a cherry-tree, longs for some of the fruit; and Joseph tells her, that he who is the father of her child may procure it for her: the tree instantly bows down to her hand. The rest of the piece is filled with the birth of the Saviour on the stage, nearly as in the Chester series.

ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS.

In the Widkirk manuscript are found two separate plays on the adoration of the Shepherds. After a soli- Widkirk loquy by *Primus Pastor*, likening the uncertainty of Plays. life to the variableness of the weather, *Secundus Pastor* (named John Horne) enters and quarrels with him: *Tertius Pastor* (called Jak, 'a garçon') who arrives on horseback, parts them, and tells them that they are

'Foles al sam;¹
Sagh² I never none so fare,
Bot the foles of Gotham.'

This allusion is very remarkable, since it shows how very ancient were the tales relating to the Men of Gotham, long before the time of Dr. Andrew Borde, who collected them. The Shepherds are reconciled and sit down to supper, refreshing themselves with 'ale of Hely' (q. Ely): they afterwards sing; and while they are lying asleep the angel an-

¹ Altogether.

² Saw.

nounces to them the birth of Christ, and waking they behold the star. After referring to Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc., *Tertius Pastor* quotes Virgil (Ecl. iv, 6), though not very correctly, and transposing the lines :

*Fam nova progenies cælo de mittitur alta
Fam rediet virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna.*

Secundus Pastor protests against this display of learning :

‘Tell us no clerge :
I hold you of the freres.¹
It semys by your Laton,
Ye have lerd² your Caton.’

They proceed without delay to Bethlehem, and make their offerings to the ‘little tyn mop’, one giving it ‘a spruse cofer’, another ‘a ball’, and the third ‘a botell’.

The second Pageant, regarding the shepherds, is the most singular piece in the whole collection : it is not a religious play, but literally a farce, by no means destitute of humour, intended to diversify the performances. The three shepherds, after conversing on their shrewish wives and other familiar topics, are about to sing (the first agreeing to take ‘the tenory’, the second ‘the tryble so hye’, and the third ‘the meyne’), when they are interrupted by the arrival of an acquaintance, named Mak, who, it seems, does not bear the best reputation for honesty. After supper, they all lie down to sleep, but the shepherds take care that Mak shall lie between them, that he may not get up unobserved, and steal their sheep. While they are snoring he, nevertheless, contrives to escape, and makes off with a fat wether, which he carries home to his wife, as he had done many before. She is afraid of his being at last detected and hanged, for

‘So long goys the pott
To the water, men says,
Comys it home broken.’

¹ Friars.

² Learnt.

Mak is himself in considerable alarm lest the shepherds should wake, and finding both him and the sheep missing, conclude that he had stolen it, and pay him a visit. The wife proposes this scheme:—that if the shepherds came, Mak should pretend that she had just been brought to bed, and that the sheep, which was to be covered up in the cradle, was the child she had produced. Mak agrees to the plan, but to avoid suspicion returns, and lies down again with the shepherds without his absence having been noticed. When the shepherds wake, they are so refreshed, that one of them says, ‘As lyght I me feyll, as leyfe on a tre’; but Mak pretends that he has laid awkwardly and in one position so long, that it has given him a crick in his neck. The shepherds walk to the fold, and Mak hastens home; where he takes care that his wife and the dead sheep are put to bed and cradled in due form. The shepherds soon miss their wether, and swear by St. Thomas of Kent, that they suspect Mak: they go to his cottage; and making a noise to be admitted, Mak entreats them not to disturb his poor wife, telling them that she has a baby. She, too, joins in the entreaty, as the least sound goes through her head; and the shepherds are for a time imposed upon. They are on the point of departing, but return and ask to see the child, and one of them offers to give it sixpence: Mak replies that it is sleeping, and that it cries sadly when it is waked; but he cannot keep them from lifting up the coverlet of the cradle. There they see their sheep, and recognise it by the ear-mark, although the wife would fain persuade them that it is her child, which had been transformed by an evil spirit.¹ This part of the representation is

¹ In the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, iii, 479, is a balladised Eskdale tradition (by the Rev. John Marriott), of Archie Armstrong having stolen a sheep and placed it in a cradle, and by pretending that it was a child, deceiving those who came in pursuit of him and it. It is

so singular, novel, and humorous, that we should not be excused if we did not give a much longer specimen of it than usual, beginning with the arrival of the three shepherds at the door of Mak's cottage, after they have discovered the loss of their fat wether.

Sec. Past.—

Mak !

Undo youre dore soyne.¹

Mak.—Who is that spak

As it were noyne ?²—On loft,

Who is that, I say ?

Ter. Past.— Goode felowse, were it day.

Mak.—As far as ye may, good, speke soft

Over a seke womans hede,

That is at mayll easse.³

I had lever be dede,

Or she had any diseasse.

Uxor.— To an othere stede.⁴

I may not well qweasse.⁵—So ! hee !

Ich fote that ye trede

Goys thorow my nese.⁶

Prim. Past.— Tell us, Mak, if ye may,

How fare ye, I say ?

Mak.— Bot are ye in this towne to day ?

Now, how fare ye ?

Ye have ryn in the myre,

And are weytt yit :

I shall make you a fyre,

If ye will sytt.

clear from this Miracle-play, that the story is much older than the time of Charles the First's banished jester. It, however, tends to confirm, in some slight degree, the northern origin of the Widkirk-plays.

¹ Soon.

² Noon.

³ *Mal-aise.*

⁴ Place.

⁵ Q. Be quiet.

⁶ Nose.

A nores¹ wold I hyre,
 Think ye on yit—a seson.
 Well qwytt is my hyre ;
 My dreame this is it.
 I have barnes,² if ye knew,
 Well mo then enewe ;
 Bot we must drynk as we brew,
 And that is bot reson.
 I wold ye dynyd or ye yode.³
 Me thynk that ye swette.

Sec. Past.—Nay, nawther mendys oure mode
 Drynk nor mette.

Mak.—Why, sir, alys you oght bot goode ?

Ter. Past.— Yee, our shepe that we gett,
 Are stollyn as thay yode.
 Our losse is grett.

Mak.—Syr, Drynk.
 Had I bene thore,
 Som shuld have boght it full sore.

Prim. Past.—Mary ! som men trowes that ye wore ;
 And that us forthynks.⁴

Sec. Past.—Mak, some men trowys
 That it shud be ye.

Ter. Past.—Ayther ye, or youre spouse ;
 So say we.

Mak.—Now, if ye have suppowse
 To Jyll or to me,
 Com and ryp oure house,
 And then may ye se—who had hir.
 If I any shepe sott,
 Ayther cow or stott.
 And Jyll, my wyfe, rose not
 Here syn she lade hir.

¹ Nurse.

² Children.

³ Went.

⁴ We believe.

As I am trew and lele,¹
 To God here I pray,
 That this be the fyrst mele,
 That I shall ete this day.

Prim. Past.—Mak, as I have ceyll,²

Awise the, I say.
 He lernyd tymely to steyll,
 That couth not say nay.

Uxor.— I swelt !

Owt, thefys, fro my wonys !³
 Ye com to rob us for the nonys.⁴

Mak.—Here ye not how she gronys ?

Youre hartys shuld melt.

Uxor.—Outt, thefys, fro my barne !

Negh hym not thor.

Mak.—Wyst ye how she had farne,⁵

Youre hartys wold be sore.

Ye do wrang, I you warne,

That thus commys before,

To a woman that has farne.

Bot I say no more.

Uxor.—A, my medyll !

I pray to God so mylde,

If ever I you begyld,

That I ete this chylde,

That lygs in this credyll.

Mak.—Peasse, woman, for Gods payn !

And cry not so :

Thou spyllys thy brane,

And maks me full wo.

Sec. Past.—I trowe oure shepe be slayn.—

What fynde ye two ?⁶

¹ Loyal. ² *Ciel*, Heaven. ³ Dwelling. ⁴ Purpose. ⁵ Farrow'd.

⁶ The two other shepherds had probably been searching the cottage, and here returned.

Ter. Past.—All wirk we in vayn :

As well may we go.—But hatters,
I can fynde no flesh,
Hard nor nesh,
Salt nor fresh,
Bot two tome platers.
Whik catell bot this
Tame nor wylde,
None, as have I blys,
As lowde as he smylde.¹

Uxor.—No, so God me blys,
And gyf me joy of my chylde.

Sec. Past.—Syr, don.²

Prim. Past.—We have markyd amys :

I hold us begyld.—
Syr, our lady hym save,
Is your chyld a knave?

Mak.—Any lord myght hym have,
This chyld to hys son :
When he wakys he kyppys,
That joy is to se.

Ter. Past.—In good tyme to his hyppys,
And in cele.—

Bot who was his gossyppys,
So sone rede?³

Mak.—So fare fall thare lyppys—

Prim. Past.—Hark, now a le.⁴

Mak.—So God thaym thank,
Parkyn and Gybon Waller, I say,
And gentyll John Horne, in good fay,
With the greatt shank ;
He made all the garray.

¹ This is an expression we are unable to interpret. Possibly we should read 'as lewde as he smelde'—*i. e.*, as wicked as he smelt.

² Perhaps, 'Sir, we have done'.

³ Ready.

⁴ Lie.

Sec. Past.—Mak, freynds will we be,
For we are all oone.

Mak.—Wel now I hald for me,
For mends gett I none.
Farewell all three :

All glad were ye gone.

Ter. Past.—Fare words may ther be,
Bot luf¹ is there none—this yere.

Prim. Past.—Gaf² ye the chyld any thyng?

Sec. Past.—I trow, not oone farthyng.

Ter. Past.—Fast, agane will I flyng :
Abyde ye me there.—
Mak, take it no grefe
If I come to thi barne.

Mak.—Nay, thou dos me greatt reprieve,
And fowll has thou farne.

Ter. Past.—The child will it not grefe,
That lytyll day starne.³
Mak, with your leyfe,
Let me gyf youre barne—bot vj pence.

Mak.—Nay, do way : he slepys.

Ter. Past.—Me thynk he pepys.

Mak.—When he wakyns he wepys :
I pray you go hence.

Ter. Past.—Gyf me lefe hym to kys,
And lyft up the clowtt.—
What the devill is this ?
He has a long snowte.

Prim. Past.—He is markyd amys :
We wate ill abowte.

Sec. Past.—Ill spon weft, I wys,
Ay commys foull owte.—Ay so !
He is lyke to our shepe.

¹ Love.

² Gave.

³ Day star.

Ter. Past.—How, Gyb ! may I pepe ?

Prim. Past.—I trowe, kynde will crepe,
Where it may not go.

Sec. Past.—This was a qwantt gawde,¹
And a farcast :

It was a hee frawde.

Ter. Past.—Yee, syrs, was't.

Lett bren this bawde,
And bynd hir fast.
A fals skawde,
Hang at the last—so shall thou.
Wyll ye se how thay swedyll
His foure feytt in the medyll ?
Sagh² I never in a credyll
A hornyd lad or now.

Mak.—Peasse byd I. What !

Lett be your fare.

I am he that hym gatt,
And yond woman hym bare.

Prim. Past.—What, devill, shall he hatt ?³

Mak, lo, God, Mak's ayre !⁴

Sec. Past.—Lett be all that.

Now, God gyf hym care,—I sagh.

Uxor.—A pratty child is he,

As sytts on a woman's kne,

A dylly downe, pardie,

To gar a man laghe.⁵

Ter. Past.—I know hym by the eare marke,

That is a good tokyn.

Mak.—I tell you, syrs, hark ;

His noyse was brokyn,

Sythen told me a clerk

That he was forspokyn.

¹ A quaint toy, trick.

² Saw.

³ Ha' it—have it.

⁴ Q. Heir.

⁵ To make a man laugh.

Prim. Past.—This is a fals wark :

I wold fayn be wrokyn.¹—Lett wepyn.²

Uxor.—He was takyn with an elfe ;

I saw it my self :

When the klok stroke twelf,

Was he forshapyn.'

All this, and more which might be quoted from the same piece, shews that something very like broad comedy, as a dramatic representation, is a great deal older than it has been supposed to be. The Shepherds beat Mak until they are all tired, and lie down to rest, just as the star in the east appears, and *Angelus cantat Gloria in excelsis*. After repeating and referring to the prophecies regarding the birth of the Saviour, the Shepherds hasten to Bethlem, where *Primus Pastor* gives Jesus 'a bob of cherrys', *Secundus Pastor* a bird, and *Tertius Pastor* a tennis ball.

The most remarkable feature in the Chester pageant *De Pastoribus greges pascentibus* (No. 7) is, as in the Wid- Chester kirk play, the total disregard of all dramatic pro- Plays. priety: the Shepherds who proceed to Bethlem are named Harvey, Tudd, and Trowle, and are Cheshire or Lancashire men by birth and habits. One of them says of himself,

'From comely Conway unto Clyde,
Under tyldes them to hyde,
A better sheapearde on no side,
Noe earthly man may have.'

They regale upon 'Jannocks³ of Lancashire', butter of Blacon, cheese, and Halton ale. For the sake of variety they have a quarrel and a fight, just before the appearance of the Star in

¹ Revenged.

² Cease crying.

³ 'Jannock. A loaf made of oat-meal leavened.'—*Tim Bobbin's Lancashire Dialect*.

the East. Trowle's gift to the Saviour is 'a pair of his wife's old hose'; and of three boys, afterwards introduced with offerings, one makes a present of his nut-hook, so that

'To pull down aples peares and plomes
Olde Joseph shall not need to hurte his thombes.'

The Shepherds in the Coventry play are extremely learned in the prophecies, and their adoration occupies the principal part of the piece.

Coventry
Plays.

OBLATION OF THE THREE KINGS.

The *Oblatio Magorum*, forming the thirteenth Pageant of the Widkirk series, first introduces us to Herod,¹ who is very boastful of his power and person, declaring 'if the fiend were my foe I should him fell'. He is informed by a messenger of the journey of the three kings (named Melchior, King of Tarsus, Balchesor, King of Saba, and Jasparr, King of Araby) through his territory, and is astonished to hear that there are other kings in the world besides himself:

'King! what the devyll, other then I?
We, fy on devylls, fy, fy!'

¹ Chaucer, in his *Miller's Tale*, refers to the performances of Herod in the old Plays of Miracles:—

'He plaieth Herode on a skaffold hie.'

And from Skelton's *Why come ye not to Court?* we learn that Mahomet, who is only mentioned and sworn by in the three existing MSS. of *Playes of Miracles*, formerly figured in some of them *in propria personâ*:—

'His servauntes menyal
He dothe revile and brall,
Like Mahound in a play.'

Shakespeare, in a well-known passage (*Hamlet*, act iii, sc. 2), couples Termagant and Herod, and Skelton also notices the former.

He sends for them, and they arrive on horseback; and the probability seems to be that real horses were employed, and that their riders dismounted in the street, or other place of representation. When they reach Bethlem, the direction is, 'Here lyghts the Kyngs of thare horses'; and having paid their adoration, they are warned by an Angel not to return through the dominions of Herod. In the next play the flight into Egypt takes place; and on commencing the journey, Joseph wishes the audience good day:—

'God bless you more and myn,¹
And have you now all good day.'

The journey and oblation of the three Kings of the East Chester form two Pageants in the Chester series, the eighth Plays. and the ninth. In the first they enter on horseback, and, after minstrels have played, they are brought before Herod, who thus addresses them regarding the extent of his power and authority:—

'I welde this worlde withouten wene,²
I beate all those unbuxom³ bene,
I drive the devills alby dene⁴
Deepe in hell a downe.

For I ame kinge of all mankinde,
I byd, I beate, I lose, I bynde,
I master the moone; take this in mynde,
That I ame moste of mighte.

I ame the greatest above degree,
That is, that was, or ever shalbe:
The sonne it dare not shine on me,
And I byd him goe downe.

¹ Less.

² *Wene* for *were*, 'dispute', for the sake of the rhyme?

³ Disobedient,

⁴ Altogether.

No raine to fall shall now be free,
Nor no lorde have that liberty,
That dare abyde and I byd fleey,
But I shall crake his crowne.'

Herod is provided with a sword which, according to the marginal direction, he 'casts up', 'casts down', and 'breaks' in his rage. There is also present, as we find by a note, a boy with a bladder (*Puer et vesicus*, in *Harl. MS.* 2124), but what he does with it does not appear.¹ The 'oblation' contains nothing deserving particular remark.

The seventeenth Pageant of the *Ludus Coventricæ* seems wanting: it probably consisted of the journey of the Coventry three Kings, because in the eighteenth play they perform their oblation. Here also, as in the Widkirk and Chester collections, Herod makes his appearance, with a speech of similar import to that already quoted, but somewhat singular for its laborious alliteration:—

'As a lord in ryalte² in non regyon so ryche,
And rulere of all remys³ I ryde in ryal a ray.
Ther is no lord of lond in lordship to me lyche⁴
Non losstyere,⁵ non lefsumere ;⁶ ever lestyng is my lay :⁷

¹ 'Boy and pig' is the marginal direction in *Harl. MS.* 2013, most likely meaning pig's bladder. A pig's bladder at the end of a stick, with peas in it, was formerly part of the caparison of a fool or jester. In *Rabelais*, book iii, c. 42, edit. 1553, Panurge, among other things, gives to Triboulet *une vessie de porc, bien enflée et resonante à cause des poys qui dedens estoient*. With this instrument he was accustomed to buffet all who came in his way. It is possible that the boy with the bladder was employed to buffet Herod, and thus to increase his rage, for the amusement of the spectators.

² Royalty.

³ Realms.

⁴ Like.

⁵ Lustier.

⁶ Liefsomer or more desirable.

⁷ Everlasting is my law.

Of bewte and of boldnes I bere ever more the belle :
 Of mayn and of myght I master every man.
 I dyng with my dowyntes the devyll downe to helle,
 For bothe of hevyn and of herth I am kynge sertayn.'

He swears as usual 'by Mahownde' and 'Saint Mahownde', and is attended by a seneschal, trumpeters and minstrels, whom at intervals he orders to 'blow with all their might', and when he sits down to a banquet, to 'blow a merry fit'.

In this pageant the measure is various and the changes sudden: just after the above the lines become short and lyrical, and it is more than probable that they were accompanied by music.

'Styward bolde,
 Walke thou on mowlde,
 And wysely beholde
 All abowte.
 Iff any thyng
 Shuld greve the Kynge,
 Bryng me tydinge
 If there be any dowte.

'Lord Kyng in crowne,
 I go fro towne,
 By bankys browne
 I wyll abyde ;
 And with erys lyste
 Est and west,
 If any geste
 On grownde gynnyth to glyde.

Upon which we are told that *Senescallus obviabit tribus regibus*, and the triplets are continued for the rest of the scene.

SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS.

The chief action of the fifteenth pageant of the Widkirk collection, called *Magnus Herodes*, is the slaughter of the innocents ; but it is introduced by some singular matter. A Messenger, in the outset, gives the following enumeration of the kingdoms that own the sway of Herod :—

‘Tuskane and Turkey, all Inde and Italy,
Cecyll and Surry drede hym and dowyts,
And [to] hym lowtys :
From Paradise to Padwa, to Mount Flascon,
From Egyp to Mantua, unto Kemp towne ;
From Sarceny to Susa, to Grece it abowne ;
Both Normandy and Norwa lowtys to his crowne.
His renowne
Can no tong tell : from heven unto hell ;
Of hym can none spell,
Bot his cosyn Mahowne.’

Herod entering commands silence, on pain that he will cleave all who make a noise ‘small as flesh to pot’. He is in a fury when he learns that the three kings have escaped, and asks his council what they find in ‘Vyrgyll, in Homere,¹ and all other thing, but legende’, as well as in ‘poetes taylys’, regarding the birth of Christ. The moment he hears of the prophecy of Isaiah, his rage is exasperated, and he swears by ‘coks dere bonys’, that his council are ‘thefys and dottypols’. Being at a loss, nevertheless, how to act, he again appeals to them for advice, and is so pleased with the recommendation of the slaughter of all male infants, that he promises to make Pope the councillor who gives it :

¹ This early mention of Homer may seem remarkable.

' If I lyf in land
 Good lyfe, as I hope,
 This dare I the warand
 To make the Pope.'¹

He instantly dispatches his knights, and they as quickly execute his orders: three children are slain, after a conflict with three mothers, and the knights having reported the execution they have done, Herod promises,

' Now by mighty Mahowne,
 That is good of renowne,
 If I bere this crowne,
 Ye shall have a lady
 Ilkon² to hym layd,
 And wed at his wyll :'

or, if they like it better, a pecuniary reward of one hundred thousand pounds each. The knights, very ungallantly, seem to prefer the latter, and Herod ends the piece with a speech in his usual strain, concluding with these two lines.

' Bot adew to the Devyll,
 I can no more French.'

Yet no part of his address is in that language now, though it probably had been so formerly.

The title of the Chester play on this subject, is *De Occisione Innocentum*, and in the commencement of it, Plays. Herod vows vengeance against that 'mysbegotten marmosett', Christ. He then sends a messenger into 'Judy' to summon his knights, and 'Sir Grymbald and Sir Launcler'

¹ The word 'Pope' has been erased in the MS., but that circumstance and the rhyme show how it stood originally. Among Thomas Cromwell's papers, in the Chapter-house, Westminster, is an order 'to put out of all service bokes this word *Papa*'. It was subsequently erased from many other existing manuscripts.

² *Ilkon* is each one.

arrive: when charged to kill 'all knave children' they hesitate until they receive a fresh and more imperative command. One of the knights then replies:—

'And I also, without bost,
Though the King of Scots, and all his host
Were here, I set not by their best
To dryve them downe by deene.'¹

They proceed to their work, and among others, by accident, kill Herod's own son.² After their return, Herod is taken suddenly ill, dies, and the devil carries him away. The conclusion of the pageant is the return of Mary and Joseph to the scene.

In the Coventry plays relating to the same events, the knights, after having killed all the male infants, sit down to a banquet with Herod; and here we have a personification of Death, 'nakyd and of poor aray', who states that he is 'god's mesangere', and that he comes to slay Herod: the following is part of his speech:—

'I am sent fro god, Deth is my name:
All thyng that is on grownd I welde at my wylle;
Both men and beste and byrdys wylde and tame,
Whan that I come them to with deth I do them kylle:
Erbe, gras, and tres stronge, take hem all in same,
Ya, the grete myghty okys with my dent I spylle.'

The introduction of this character seems one of the compara-

¹ This passage is in *Harl. MS.* No. 2124 only.

² This incident is also found in the French *Mistère de la Conception*, etc., Paris, 1486. The nurse exclaims,

'Ha, faulx murdriers! qu'avez vous fait?
Occis avez villainement
Le fils d'Herode proprement!'

See also Mr. Markland's note upon this portion of the Chester play in Malone's *Shakespeare by Boswell*, iii, 542.

tively modern interpolations, and the whole of his speech indicates a considerable improvement in poetical thought and expression. This portion is, probably, not older than the reign of Henry VI, or Edward IV.¹ While Herod is rejoicing in the slaughter, and swearing 'by Mahound', and his two knights 'by Sathanas our sire', Death strikes them, and *Diabolus recipiat eos*. The devil exclaims:—

'All oure ! all oure ! this catel is myne !
I shall hem brynge onto my celle :
I shall hem teche pleyes fyne,
And showe suche myrthe as is in helle,' etc.²

The purification, which in the Widkirk and Chester plays follows the slaughter of the innocents, in the *Ludus Coventriæ*

¹ Mr. Sharp (*Dissertation on the Coventry Mysteries*, 53) mentions the Mother of Death as one of the characters in the Cappers pageant, but Death himself does not appear in any of the entries. When Mr. Sharpe illustrates the item by reference to Death in the Moral of *Every Man*, he omits to notice that he forms an important character in the pageant before us. He also figures, as will be seen hereafter, in the MS. Morals once in the possession of Dr. Cox Macro, and formerly in the library of the late Mr. Hudson Gurney, which, we apprehend, were written about the date when the interpolation in the Coventry Miracle-play under review was inserted.

² The piece called *Childemas Day*, printed in Hawkins's *Origin of the English Drama*, has more marks of antiquity about it, in some respects, than the Coventry pageant on the slaughter of the innocents. It is, perhaps, the very same piece played by the English fathers at Constance, in 1417, mentioned by Warton, *Hist. Eng. Poet.*, ii, 75. It is clearly much older than the date when the copy in the Bodleian Library (*MSS.*, *Digby*, 133) was made in 1512. The death of Herod is managed as inartificially as in the Chester play, but the Devil does not fly away with him. In *Le Mistère de la Nativité, Passion*, etc., *Joué à Paris*, 1507, the death of Herod is very singularly brought about : Satan and Astaroth are present, but invisible, when Herod, who is paring an apple, receives

precedes it. In the two former it also includes the dispute between Christ and the Doctors in the temple, which forms a separate pageant (No. 21) in the Coventry series.

CHRIST'S BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION.—THE WOMAN TAKEN
IN ADULTERY, ETC.

The seventeenth pageant of the Widkirk Collection is the baptism of the Saviour by St. John: and it affords Widkirk proof that this series of plays was represented after Plays. the Reformation, for a passage, formerly repeated, relating to and enforcing the seven Roman Catholic sacraments, is crossed out with red ink, and the number of those sacraments is carefully erased. In the margin, in a handwriting of perhaps the reign of Edward VI, are inserted the words 'corrected and not played'. The lines cancelled are the following:—

'Here I the anoynt also with oyle and creme, in this intent,
That men may wit where so thay go, this is a worthy sacrament.
There are othere and no mo, the which thy self to teche
 was sent,
And in true tokyn oone of tho, the fyrst, on thee now is spent.'¹

unlooked-for tidings of the escape of Jesus Christ. Satan then tempts him to commit suicide,

'Mechant homme, fiers en ton ventre
Le cousteau, sant tant endurer', etc.

Herod takes his advice, and after a few blasphemous lines, stabs himself. The devils seize his soul, and Lucifer orders it to be plunged in molten lead: it is added *icy font les diables tempeste*.

¹ In the twenty-fourth pageant of the Towneley series the following lines, supporting the doctrine of transubstantiation, from the mouth of the Saviour on the cross, are also cancelled for the same reason.

'That ilk veray brede of lyfe
Becomys my fleshe in words fyfe :

The piece terminates with a sermon against the deadly sins, addressed by St. John to the audience. This brings us, in the Widkirk series, at once to the *Conspiratio Christi*, the proposal on the part of Judas to betray his master.

Neither the Chester, nor the Coventry plays arrive at this Chester event by any means so speedily. In the first we Plays. have (No. 12.) *Tentatio Salvatoris*,¹ including the incident of the woman taken in adultery, and (No. 13) *De*

Whoso it resaves in syn or stryfe
Bese dede forever ;
And whoso it takes in rightwys lyfe
Dy shall he never.'

In the moral of *Every-man*, Five-wits, eulogising the priesthood, says,

'God hath to them more power gyven
Than to any angel that is in heven.
With five words he may consecrate
God's body in fleshe and blood to make,
And handeleth his maker between his handes.'

Taken by itself, this looks like irony, and as if it had been written in the same spirit of reformation as the following lines, from a poem by John Mardeley, addressed to Q. Elizabeth immediately after she came to the throne. It is in the *Royal MSS.*, 17, B, xxxvij.

'Why worship you then a God so feable,
In whome is neither lyfe nor yet feallinge?
He is of no power to do good, nor yet evile,
For he fealleth no payne when he is bakyng,
Neither anye thyng in the priests breakyng,
Because no spirite of lyfe in hym is inspired ;
For whan he is raysed he appereth not standing.'

¹ There is here a remarkable variance between the two copies of these pieces in the British Museum. In the *Harl. MS.* No. 2124, Satan, foiled in his attempts upon the Saviour, retires, having made what he calls 'his Testament', and leaving a very substantial, but far from odoriferous legacy among the spectators. This, it will be seen, corresponds nearly with the Coventry pageant on the same subject.

Resurrectione Lazari. They, however, present nothing requiring particular notice.

After the baptism of Christ, which fills the whole of the twenty-second play of the Coventry series, a council Coventry
is held in hell in the twenty-third play, which is opened Plays.
by 'Sir Sathanas', who addresses 'the dere wurthy devels of hell'; and it is determined that he shall be employed to tempt the Saviour: when he has taken Christ to the top of the high mountain he thus mentions some of the kingdoms of the world, spread beneath them:—

'Turne thee now on this side, and se here Lumbardye ;
Of spycery there growyth many an C balys :
Archas and Aragon and grett Almonye ;
Parys and Portyngale, and the towne of Galys :
Powntoys and Paperynge, and also Picardye,
Erlonde, Scottlonde and the londe of Walys.'¹

It will be observed that England is not mentioned, though Ireland, Scotland and Wales are in the enumeration. Satan is greatly mortified at his defeat, and signifies to the audience the state of his mind in a sonorous, but most indecorous manner. In the 24th pageant, of the woman taken in adultery, the young man is thus described making his escape, *Hic juvenis quidam extra currit, indeploydo,² caligis non ligatis, et braccas in manu tenens.* The Scribes are prodigal of the

¹ In the French *Mistère de la Passion* the view is much more enlarged, but there France is not included:

'Tous royaulmes de noble arroy
Desquels je suis seigneur et roy :
Rome tiens, Grece à moy s'applique,
Arabe, Tharse, Asye, Afrique,
Egipte, Calde, Babilonne,
Tout est à moy, et tout te donne.'

² The word *indeploydo* we cannot explain: it may mean *undressed*.

coarsest terms of abuse against the woman. Lazarus dies on the stage in the 25th pageant, and four days elapse after his burial before he is raised by Jesus. The 26th Coventry pageant presents some singular interpolations and additions, which afford internal evidence that they were made about the reign of Henry VI or Edward IV. Satan opens it by declaring himself

‘I am your lord Lucifer, that out of helle cam,
Prince of this world, and gret duke of helle.’

This information is necessary, because he is disguised as a gallant; and he gives a long and minute description of his dress and manners, belonging to the period to which we have alluded. The following is the most curious portion of it.

‘By holde the dyvercyte of my dysgysed varyauns.....
Of fyne cordewan a goodly peyre of long pekyd schon,¹
Hosyn enclosyd of the most costyous cloth of crenseyn,²
Thus a bey³ to a jentylman to make comparycon :
With two doseyn poyntys of cheverelle, the aglotts⁴ of sylver feyn.
A shert of feyn Holond, but care not for the payment.
A stomachere of clere Reynes,⁵ the best may be bowth⁶.....
Cadace-wolle,⁷ or flokkys, where it may be sowth⁸
To stuff withal thi dobbelet and make the of proporcyon.
Two smale legges and a gret body, thow it ryme nowth,⁹
Yet loke that you desyre to an¹⁰ the newe faccon ;
A gowne of thre yerdys, loke you make compason
Unto all degrees dayly that pass thi estat.
A purse with outyn mony, a daggere for devoscyon.....
With syde lorkys,¹¹ I schrewe, thi here to thi colere hanging downe,

¹ Shoes.² Crimson.³ Qy. Able.⁴ Aguillets.⁵ Rennes.⁶ Bought.⁷ Cadiz-wool.⁸ Sought.⁹ The meaning seems to be ‘though it accord not’; *i. e.*, the great body with small legs.¹⁰ *Han* or have.¹¹ Side-locks of hair. *Side-locks* continued in fashion during the reign

To herborwé qweke bestys,¹ that tekele men onyth;²
And hey smal bonet, for curyng of the crowne', etc.

This is one of the most curious pictures of a gallant of that day to be found in any writer: as to his manners, any person who wishes to sustain such a character, is advised to deal in 'gret othys and lycherye', 'bribery', and to pretend 'he will fight'. He is farther to set the civil and canon law alike at defiance, and to obey neither 'precept nor commandment'. The Devil also takes the opportunity of drawing a companion-portrait of a lady, who if 'money lakke', is to procure it by 'here privy plesawns.'

'Here colere splayed and furryd with ermyn, calabere³ or satan,
A seyn⁴ to selle lechory to hem that wyll bey;⁵
And thei that wyll not by it, yet inow shal thei han,
And telle hem it is for love, she may it not deney', etc.

The whole is, perhaps, the earliest specimen of dramatic satire in our language; and so afraid was the writer that some 'politic pick-lock of the scene' would give it personal application, that he makes Satan add:—

'I have browth yow newe namys, and wyll ye se why?
For synne is so plesaunt to eche mannys intent;
Ye shal kalle pride oneste and naterall kende lechory,

of Henry VII, as appears from the following passage in H. Medwall's Interlude of *Nature*, written before 1490, and printed after Henry VIII ascended the throne. *Pride* says,

'I love yt well to have syde here
Half a wote [foote] byneth myne ere,
For ever more I stande infere,
That myne nek sholde take cold.'

¹ To harbour *quick* or live beasts.

² Night.

³ Calabrian fur. See Strutt's *Dress and Habits*, vol. ii, p. 219.

⁴ Sign.

⁵ Buy.

And covetyse wysdam, there tresure is present,
Wreth manhod, and envye callyd chastement.'

That is to say: I have brought you new names and for this reason—that sin is so pleasant to every man, that he calls lechery honesty and natural kindness, covetousness wisdom, wrath courage', etc. The rest of this play relates chiefly to a council of the Jews, called to consider the best course for stopping the increase of the followers of Christ: the subsequent stage direction will evince that some attention was paid to propriety, as far as relates to the dresses of the characters.

'Here shal Annas shewyn hym self in his stage, be seyn after a Busshopp [Bishop] of the hoold [old] law, in a skarlet gowne, and over that a blew tabbard, furryd with whyte, and a mytere on his hede after the hoold lawe: ij Doctorys stondyng by hym in furryd hodys [hoods], and on [one] beforn hem with his staff of astat [state], and eche of hem on here hedys a furryd cappe, with a gret knop in the crowne, and on [one] stondyng be forn as a Sarasyn, the wich shal be his massangere.'

This Sarasyn Messenger is sent to and fro between Annas and Caiphas, who have separate stages or scaffolds: they afterwards descend into 'the mid place' between the scaffolds, and there we are told 'shal be a lytyl oratory with stolys [stools] and cusshonys clenly be seyn, lych [like] as it were a cownsel hous.' Among those who assist at the council, are two persons named Rewfyn and Lyon, who seem to represent the whole body of Jews, inimical to the Saviour. The council is followed by the entry of Christ into Jerusalem; four citizens and some children spreading garments and flowers before him. It is evident, that in the mean while 'the Council-house' was closed by some contrivance, for after Christ has entered (in the next pageant, No. 27) the dwelling of Simeon the water-bearer, it 'sodeynly uncloses, schowing the bushopps, prestys

[priests], and Jēwys, sytting in here astat, lych [like] as it were a convocacyon'. The mechanical contrivances, necessary for this part of the exhibition, were no doubt of comparatively late invention and introduction.

TREACHERY OF JUDAS.—CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST.

We return now to the *Conspiratio Christi*, No. 18 of the Widkirk plays. Pilate, with his 'burnished brand', Widkirk enforces silence; and as Herod had called himself the Plays. 'cousin', he terms himself 'the grandsire of Mahowne'. Pilate converses with Caiphas and Annas on the miracles wrought by Christ, and here the measure of the verse is peculiarly alliterative and difficult: for instance, Annas thus speaks of what he has seen Christ perform :—

'Lord, dom and defe, in oure present,
Delivers he by downe and dayll :
What hurtes or harmes they hent,
Full hastily he makes theym hayll :
And for sich warks as he is went,
Of ilk walth may he awayll ;
And unto us he takes no tent,
But ilk man trowes unto his tayll.'

The reduplication of the same rhyme added to the difficulty, and rendered considerable ingenuity necessary. Judas enters, and offers to betray his master, accepting thirty pence as his reward. What becomes of Pilate and Caiphas we are not informed ; but we next find Christ eating the Paschal lamb, in the house of a person called only *Pater Familias*. Christ prophesies that Judas will betray him, and a personification of the Trinity is introduced, to tell the Saviour that he must descend into hell to release Adam, Eve, the Prophets, etc. What is termed the *Captio Christi* then takes place by Pilate, and by

some knights whom he calls 'curtes Kayzers of Kainys Kyn', *i. e.*, 'courteous Cæsars of Cain's kindred'. In the next pageant (No. 19), *Primus* and *Secundus Tortor* carry Christ before Caiphas and Annas; and the former, provoked by the silence of the prisoner, wishes 'the devils durt in his beard', and threatens to 'thrust out both his een', and to 'put him in the stockys', to 'murder him', and to 'hang him'. By advice of Annas Christ is sent before Pilate; and after the *Tortores*, aided by a person named Froward-taunt, have beaten the Saviour, we find him on Pilate's scaffold in the succeeding piece (No. 20), Pilate having first made a speech, avowing himself 'full of sotelty, falshed, gyle, and trechery', and the friend of all the 'dere darlyngs of Mahowne', who 'use bak-bytings and slanderyngs'. He refuses to sentence Jesus, but while he washes his hands secretly gives orders for his crucifixion. John, the apostle, conveys the sad tidings to the Virgin, Mary Magdalen, etc.; and at the close of the play, Christ is brought in bearing his cross, and prophesying the destruction of Jerusalem. *Processus Crucis* forms the 21st play; and Pilate, having enjoined the 'harlots, dastards, thefes, and mychers' present to silence, the hands of the Saviour are bound, and the cross elevated: the *Tortores* taunt and insult Christ by pretending that he is a king, and that he is going to ride in a 'just or turnament'. The nailing upon and raising of the cross is a tedious process, and when it is ended, Jesus makes a long address, reproaching his persecutors, and among other things says:—

'All creatures that kynde may kest,¹
 Beestys, byrds, all have they rest
 When they ar wo begon;
 Bot gods son, that shuld be best,
 Has not where apon his hede to rest,
 Bot on his shulder bone.'

¹ Cast.

Alluding, pathetically and picturesquely, to the manner in which his head, after the fatigue and agony he had endured, fell upon one shoulder.

The *Tortores* 'draw cuts' for Christ's garment, and after he is dead, Longius, 'a blind knight', is led in: he thrusts a spear into the Saviour's side, and some of the blood flowing upon his eyes, his sight is restored. In the end, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus take down the body from the cross.

Besides the undertaking to betray Christ by Judas, the fourteenth play of the Chester collection includes the Chester forgiveness of Mary Magdalen, and the driving of the Plays. money-changers out of the temple. The fifteenth play is *De cœnâ Domini*: Judas points out his master, and a knight, named Malchus, seizing the Saviour, Peter cuts off the assailant's ear, which Christ, by merely touching, restores to it splace. In the sixteenth play, Jesus is carried before Herod, who thus addresses him :

'A! welcome, Jesus, verament,
And I thanke Pilate of this present ;
For ofte tymes I have bene in that intente
After thee to have sente.

'Jesu, moch have I harde of thee ;
Some vertue fayne now woulde I see :
Yf thou from god in majesty
Be comen, tell us here.
I pray thee saye now to me,
And prove some of thy postee,
And moche the gladder woulde I bee
Truely all this yeare.'

* Herod swears furiously because *Jesus nihil respondebit*, and dispatches him to Pilate, who asks Christ 'What is sothnes?' [truth] to which the Saviour replies, 'Sothnes came from

godes see'. He is then handed over to the Jews, who, while insulting and torturing him, use what were subsequently known as Skeltonic verses.¹

The close of the following quotation is very singular, considering where the scene of the play is supposed to be laid:—

'Tertius Judeus.—Now he is bounden,
Be he never soe wounden,
Soone he shalbe fonden
With flapes in feare.

Quartus Judeus.—In wo he was wonden,
And his grave is gronden:
No lad unto London
Such law cane hym lere.²

To this succeeds the denial of Christ by St. Peter, and the piece closes with the crucifixion, before the eyes of the spectators, but presenting nothing novel.

The twenty-seventh pageant of the *Ludus Coventriæ* (they Coventry are sometimes numbered and divided differently) Plays. opens with Christ's prophecy regarding Jerusalem: it proceeds to the interview with Mary Magdalen, the Lord's Supper, and the betraying of Christ. The Devil, aside and unseen, rejoices in the calamity likely to befall the Saviour. Jesus in the next piece ascends Mount Olivet, and when he arrives 'in a place lych to a park, he byddys his disciples abyde hym'. Jesus subsequently descends to 'the place' or open space between the different scaffolds, and is there taken by 'ten personys weyl be seen in white arneys, [harness or armour] and breganders, and some dysgyssed in odyr [other] garments, with swerdys [swords] gleyvys [glaives] and other straunge wepons, as cressetys with feyr, and lanternys and

¹ From John Skelton, the poet of the reign of Henry VIII, who wrote usually in that measure.

² Teach.

torchis lyth' [light]. After what is marked as the twenty-eighth play of this series, there is a separate leaf, with prayers by two doctors, which seem intended as a sort of prologue.¹ The twenty-ninth pageant begins with a speech by Herod, declaring,

'To kylle a thousand Crystyn I gyf not an hawe,
To se hem hangyn or brent² to me is very plesauns;
To dryvyn hem in to doongenys,³ dragonys to knawe.
And to rend here flesche and bonys onto here sustenauns.'

He only enters to attract attention; for when he and his knights retire, Jesus is brought before Caiphas and Annas, who send him (in No. 30) to Pilate's scaffold, where he is

¹ It may be conjectured, that at least all that follows of this series originally belonged to a different collection of Miracle-plays, not performed at Coventry, but at Durham, and that the conclusion of one set has been attached to the beginning of another. On a blank leaf preceding the twenty-ninth pageant is inscribed, in a comparatively modern hand, 'Ego R. H. Dunelmensis, Possideo: Ου κτησις αλλα χρησις', and 'Robert Hegge Dunelmensis' is written at the very commencement of the series. It is to be observed also, that the handwriting is the same throughout the whole volume called, and perhaps miscalled, the *Ludus Coventriæ*. The summaries by the Vexillators, in the outset, do not apply with any degree of exactness to the pageants after No. 28, which are often confusedly numbered. Be this as it may, it is very certain that the pageants from No. 29, inclusive, to the end, wherever they were played, were not represented in the same year as those that preceded them. A new personage in this series, but sometimes found in the Chester plays, called *Expositor*, says, in the opening of No. 29,

'Be the love and soferauns of All myghty god
We entendyn to procede the matere that we lefte the last yere;
Wherefore we be seche yow, that yow wyllys be good
To kepe the passyon in your minde that shal be shewyd here.
The last yere we shewyd,' etc.

Giving a summary of the preceding part of the exhibition.

² Burnt.

³ Dungeons.

sitting in what is called the 'Moot-hall'. Pilate refusing to interfere, Jesus is conveyed to Herod, where he is stripped and beaten 'till he is all bloody'. We then come to the subsequent direction: 'Here enteryth Satan into the place [meaning again the centre surrounded by the stages or scaffolds] in the most orryble wyse, and qwyl that he pleyth they shall don on Jesus clothis'. Satan's speech commences the thirty-first pageant, in which he calls upon hell to make ready, as Christ would soon visit it. A devil, speaking in hell, warns Satan, that if Christ invades his regions there will be an end of his power; and Satan begins to think that he has gone too far, and acted imprudently in promoting the death of Christ: he therefore hastens to 'Pilate's wife', 'the corteyn drawing as she lyth in bedde', and is supposed to visit her in a dream; from which she starts, and with 'her kyrtyl in here hand', 'like a mad woman', she runs to her husband's scaffold, tells him her vision, and thus warns him not to condemn Jesus.

'Pylat, I charge thee that thou take hede,
Deme not Jhesu, but be his frend;
Zyf thou jewge hym to be dede,
Thou art damnyd withouten ende.

'A fend aperyd me before,
As I lay in my bed slepyng fast.
Sethyn the tyme that I was born,
Was I nevyr so sore agast.

'As wylde fyre and thondyr blast
He came crying unto me:
He sayd thei that bete Jhesu, or bownd hym fast,
Withoutyn ende damnyd shal be.

'Therefore away herein thou see,
And lete Jhesu from the[e] clere pace:
The Jewys thei woll begyle thee,
And put on thee all the trespase.'

Pilate mildly replies,

‘Gramercy, myn wyf, for ever ye be trewe ;
Your counsel is good and ever hath be :
Now to your chamber do ye sewe,
And all shall be weyl, dame, as ye shall see.’

The thirty-second play is occupied with the cruelty and insults of the Jews, and finally with the crucifixion of the Saviour between the two thieves, Pilate, Caiphas, and Annas ‘coming down from their scaffolds’ to witness it.

CASTING THE DICE.

In the Widkirk Collection, we now arrive at a play (No. 22) which seems to have been intended only to excite laughter among the spectators, and is in no way a necessary part of the performance, as the event to which it refers has been before disposed of, viz., the drawing lots for Christ’s garment. Pilate begins it with some Latin monkish verses :—

‘*Cernite, qui statis, quod miræ sum potestatis :*
Hoc cognoscatis, vos cedam ni taceatis,’ etc.

He afterwards gives a specimen of his poetical skill, in lines half English, and half Latin.

‘Stynt, I say ; gyf men place, *quia sum dominus dominorum :*
He that agans me says, *rapietur lux oculorum .*’

and he adds the etymology of his own name, to show that he was of a royal stock, making the Latin the first part of the line, and the English the last :—

‘*Stemate reginæ,* Kyng Atus gate me of Pila ;’
hence, of course, *Pilatus* ; but he tells us also that *nomine*

vulgari he was 'Pownce Pilate', or Pontius Pilate. Having gone through this fatigue, he lies down to sleep, and the two *Tortores*, accompanied by a third who calls himself Spillpain, enter for the purpose of procuring the decision of Pilate, as to who is to have Christ's garment. Pilate, awakened by one of his council, tries in various ways to defraud the *Tortores* of the subject of dispute, and when he proposes that they should 'draw cuts', they suspect that he will overreach them: they produce three dice, thinking that with them they shall be his match, and after much discussion they throw, and Spillpain wins; but Pilate obtains the garment after all, partly by force, and partly by threats. The *Tortores* then, like unsuccessful gamesters, read a moral lecture on the vice of gambling, of which the following is the sum:

'What commys of dysing,
I pray you hark after,
But los of good lakyng,¹
And oft tymes mens slaughter?'

Nothing at all resembling this piece is found in either of the other two manuscript collections of plays.

DESCENT OF CHRIST INTO HELL.—THE RESURRECTION.

The descent of Christ into Hell, founded upon the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus (Ch. xvi, xvii, xviii, and xix), forms one of every known collection of Miracle-plays,² and it was no doubt a favourite subject, on account of

¹ *i. e.*, Goods that you are wanting, or lacking.

² One of the oldest MSS. of a Miracle-play in English (mentioned in our Introduction) is occupied by this event: it was written as early as the reign of Edward III, and is in the British Museum. (*Harl. MS.* No. 2253, fol. 55, b.) It is a piece regularly constructed, with a sort of pro-

the scope it afforded for the display of strong contrasts, and especially for the exhibition of the dismay and discomfiture of Satan and his attendant demons.

logue and epilogue. After the prologue, Christ enters, and states his sufferings, and design in descending to hell: Satan hears him, and enquires who it is, lest he should 'fonden how we pleyen here'. The Saviour declares himself; and Satan argues with him on the injustice of depriving him, Satan, of what he has acquired, observing,

'Whoso buyth any thing,
Hit is hys ant his offspr yng.'

i. e., 'whosoever buys anything, it belongs to him and his offspring'. Christ contends, on the contrary, that the apple with which Satan bought Adam was his property, and tells the devil that he must submit, as 'Ambes-aas' has fallen to hym; in other words, that Satan has cast the dice, and has thrown both aces. After much discussion, the Saviour arrives at the gates of hell and exclaims,

'Helle gates y come nou to,
And y wole that heo¹ un do.
Wer ys nou this gateward?
Me thuncketh he is a coward.'

The 'gateward', or porter of hell, runs away, saying,

'Ich have herd wordes stronge,
Ne dar y her no lengore stonde:
Kepe the gates whoso may,
Y lete them stonde ant renne away.'

The Saviour binds Satan in hell till 'that come domesday', and apparently without any resistance: Christ is then received by Adam, Eve, Abraham, David, St. John the Baptist, and Moses. Adam says,

'Welcome louerd² god of londe,
Godes sone ant godes sonde,³
Welcome louerd mote thou be,
That thou wolt us come and se.'

Each of the other characters makes a speech in turn, and the epilogue warns the audience not to commit any offences that may put them in peril of hell and its pains.

¹ They.

² Lord.

³ Messenger.

In the Widkirk series, Christ descends, in the 23rd pageant, stating the object of his visit: Adam sees the 'gleam' of his coming, and announces it to Eve and the Prophets, who sing for joy—*et content omnes Salvator mundi*. Rybald, one of the demons and porter of hell, is in great alarm, and calls out to Belzebub to prepare for resistance. The terror becomes general; and 'Astarot, and Anaball, Berith and Belyall', together with 'Sir Satan our sire', are summoned, while 'watches are set on the walls'.—Satan threatens to beat out Belzebub's brains for rousing him. The devils refuse to open the gate, and Christ exclaiming *Attollite portas*, etc., they burst. Satan from below orders his fiends to 'dyng the dastard downe', and Belzebub replies, 'that is soon said'. Satan ascends from the pit of hell, and Christ tells him that he is come to fetch his own, and that his Father sent him: Satan answers, that he 'knew his Father well by sight', and reasons with Christ, on the impolicy and injustice of releasing those already damned. Argument failing, he entreats Christ to take him out of hell also, to which the Saviour replies, that although he will not do that, he will leave him some company, Cain, Judas, Achitophel, Cato, and others who had destroyed themselves: he adds that such as obey his laws shall never come to hell, which rejoices Satan, because he congratulates himself that hell will soon be fuller than ever, since he intends to walk east and west, in order to seduce mankind from obedience. Christ replies

'Nay, feynde, thou shalbe feste,¹
That thou shall flyt no far.²

Satan.—Feste? fy! that were a wykyd treson.
Bellamy,³ thou shalbe smytt.

¹ Fast.

² Farther.

³ Bellami.

Jhu.—Devoll, I commaunde the to go downe
Into thy sete, where thou shall syt.

Satan.—Alas, for doyll¹ and care !
I synk into hell pyt.'

Satan probably made his *exit* through a trap door, the part under the stage or scaffold being intended to represent the infernal regions. Jesus then frees Adam, Eve, Moses, David, Isaiah, etc., who conclude by singing *Te Deum laudamus*.

The *Descensus Christi ad Inferos*, which forms the seventeenth play of the series performed at Chester, is conducted in a very similar manner, excepting that Satan, addressing his 'hell-houndes', gives them information of the intended visit of Christ ; but even he is not aware that Christ is coming to free Adam, Eve, and the Prophets. Satan boasts of the manner in which he had excited all the Jews against the Saviour :

'Against this shrew, that comes here,
I tempted the folke in fowle mannere :
Aysell² and gall for his dinnere
I made them for to dighte.'

The most singular part of this piece is its conclusion, which is an addition, made possibly at some period when much cheating had been detected among those who kept taverns and ale-houses in Chester : it is perhaps a piece of satire that had also a personal allusion, now of course lost. A woman, who had been a 'taverner and tapster' in Chester, addresses 'Sir Sathanas, sergeant of hell', after his dominions had been emptied : having related how she had cheated her customers, with bad wine and small measures, she declares that she will remain and keep the devil company. Satan and *Primus* and *Secundus Demon* welcome her, the last saying,

¹ Dole or grief.

² Vinegar.

‘Welcome, deare darlinge, to endles bale,
 Useinge cardes, dice and cuppes smale,
 With many false othes to sell thy ale :
 Now thou shalte have a feaste.’¹

The descent of Christ to hell fills only two pages of the Coventry *Ludus Coventrie*, but it is marked as a separate Plays. pageant (No. 33). It presents nothing requiring particular notice, and possibly much of it was acted in dumb show. The thirty-fourth pageant contains the incident of the restoration of the sight of ‘blind Longius’, which is inserted in the twenty-first play of the Towneley Manuscript.

The *Resurrectio Domini* is treated very similarly in the three sets of Miracle-plays, and they all follow, with tolerable exactness, the account of this event in the New Testament. It occupies the twenty-fourth play of the Towneley series, the eighteenth play of the Chester collection, and the thirty-fifth play of the *Ludus Coventrie*. The following is a specimen, in the latter, of the mode in which one of the soldiers, placed to watch the tomb, expresses his terror and dismay, after he rouses himself and finds the body of the Saviour gone :

‘Awake ! awake !
 Hillis gin quake,
 And tres ben shake
 Full nere a too :²
 Stonys cleyvd
 Wyttyt ben revid³
 Erys ben devid,⁴
 I am servid soo.’

The appearance of Christ to Cleophas, and Luke, and afterwards to St. Paul, and the rest of the apostles, consti-

¹ This strange conclusion is only found in *Harl. MS.* No. 2013 and not in *Harl. MS.* No. 2124.

² Nearly in two.

³ Taken away.

⁴ Deafened.

tutes the chief subject of the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth pageants of the Widkirk collection. The unbelief of St. Thomas, and his subsequent conviction, are treated at some length.¹ The same matters are included in the latter part of the eighteenth and in the whole of the nineteenth plays, as they were represented at Chester. The thirty-sixth, thirty-seventh, and thirty-eighth plays of the Coventry series go into the same subjects, in tedious detail.

THE ASCENSION.—ANTICHRIST.

The twenty-seventh Widkirk play is imperfect at the end, but that part which relates to the ascension is complete : the stage direction is, *et sic ascendit, cantantibus Angelis, Ascendo ad patrem meum*. This brings us to the *Judicium* in the Towneley Manuscript ; but the Chester plays present some curious matter before we arrive at that point. In the *Ascensio Domini* (No. 20), Christ sings himself :—‘*tunc Jesus ascendit, et in ascendendo cantet*, God allmighty alone.’ There is a chorus of angels, but he again

¹ The unbelief of St. Thomas is the chief subject of the York pageant, forming part of a procession of pageants represented in that city in 1415, and, perhaps, before that date. It was published by Croft in his *Excerpta Antiqua*, 1797, p. 105. Nearly the whole of that piece is in the following form of stanza, put into the mouth of St. Thomas, when he is convinced of the truth of the resurrection :—

‘ My Lord, my god, full well is me:
A ! blod of pryse blyst might thou be,
Mankind on earth behold and see
This blessid blod.
Marcy, Lord, now haske I thee
With mane and mood.’

It is conducted throughout very simply and scripturally.

twice sings, and it is marked in the margin, *cantet solus*. The whole of the twenty-first play is devoted to the election of St. Matthew, and the descent of the Holy Ghost; and the twenty-second play is engrossed by prophesies of the judgment to come, and by an explanation from 'the Expositor' of St. Jerome's fifteen signs of the day of judgment.

The twenty-third Chester play is one of the most remarkable in that series, and it has, we believe, no parallel in our language: it is entitled *De adventu Antichristi*, and is thus conducted.—Antichrist commences with some monkish Latin verses: then he assumes almighty power, and after raising two dead men, and dying himself and coming to life again, he gives away to four credulous kings what are called the four kingdoms of the world:

'To thee I gyve Lomberdy,
And to thee Denmarke and Hongarye,
And take thou Ponthus and Italy,
And Rome it shalbe thyne.'

So that the geographical knowledge of the author was neither very extensive nor very accurate. Enoch and Elias arrive to disprove the claim of Antichrist to be the Messiah: Antichrist says of the Saviour:—

'He calles hym selfe Christe and Messi:
He lyes, for soth, apertly.
He is the devill you to anoy,
And for non other hym knowe.'

And, afterwards, he adds,

'This devills lyme,¹ that comen is,
That sayth heaven and earth is his,
Now we be ready, 'leeve you this,
Against hym for to mote.'²

¹ Limb.

² To argue.

The four kings consent to listen to the 'proofs of disputation', and an argument is commenced, between Enoch and Elias on one side and Antichrist on the other, in which 'devils limb', 'harlot', 'false faitour', 'felon', 'thief', and other terms of the same kind, are bandied between them. At last Enoch and Elias challenge Antichrist to make the dead, whom he had before raised, eat: Elias blesses bread in the name of the Trinity; and, marking it with a cross, requires the dead to taste it, but they turn from it with fear and horror. *Primus Mortuus* says,

'Alas ! put that bread out of my sighte ;
To loke one yt I ame not lighte.
That printe that is upon it pighte,¹
That putts me to greate feare.'

This proof is quite convincing to the four kings, and Antichrist, in a fury, draws a sword and kills them, as well as Enoch and Elias. The Archangel Michael arrives, and does the same execution on Antichrist: '*Tunc Michaell occidit Antichristum, et in occidendo clamat Antichristus Helpe! Helpe! Helpe! Helpe!*'

'Helpe, Sathanas and Luciffer,
Belzabub bold balacheire !
Ragnell, Ragnell, thou arte my deare !
Now fare I wounder evill.
Alas, alas, where is my power ?
Alas, my wittes is in a were !
Now bodye and soule, bouth in feare,
And all goeth to the devil.'

Two demons enter, and after some lamentations, that he was thus dead who would have furnished hell with 'many a fat morsell', they carry him away, and Enoch and Elias rise,

¹ *i. e.*, the sign of the cross impressed upon the bread.

'*et auditoribus status suos commonstrabunt*'. The end of the pageant is the departure of Enoch and Elias with Michael to heaven, with these lines :—

'Enock and Helye, come you anon:
My lord will that you with me gone
To heaven blysse, both blood and bone,
evermore there to bee.

You have binne, for you bynne wyse,
Dwellinge in yearthlye paradyce ;
But to heaven, where himselfe ys,
nowe shall you goe with mee.

*Tunc abducens eos ad cœlos cantabit Angelus,
Gaudete justi in Domino,* etc.

The thirty-ninth and fortieth pageants of the *Ludus Coventry* *trix* refer to the ascension, the choice of St. Matthew, Plays. and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. Some Jews, who view the Apostles under the influence of the miraculous gift, imagine they are intoxicated :

'Mustel in here brayn so selyly doth crepe,
That thei chateryn and chateryn as they jays were.'

The forty-first pageant is in a different hand-writing, and was most likely added to the collection some time after the others. It relates to the assumption of the Virgin, and is not necessarily connected with anything that has gone before.

¹ *Must* is new wine or wort. Wickliffe, in his translation of the *Acts of the Apostles*, ii, 13, referring to this event, uses the same word,

'Othir scorniden and seiden, for these men ben full of *must*.'
Our present version gives it thus,

'Others mocking said, these men are full of *new wine*.'

THE LAST JUDGMENT.

The opening of the twenty-eighth play, entitled *Judicium*, is wanting in the *Towneley manuscript*, but it is obvious that but little has been lost. Four wicked souls, who have heard the last trumpet, are rising in dismay, and after they have talked for some time, and cursed their parents and the day they were born, *Primus Angelus cum gladio* separates the good souls from the bad, and Christ descends to pronounce the final doom. The sentence, however, is delayed, in order to diversify the performance with a long scene between three Devils, *Primus Demon*, *Secundus Demon*, and *Tutivillus*: the latter does not enter until the two former have recovered, in a degree, from their alarm at hearing the last trumpet, in consequence of which hell was empty of souls. They turn over their books busily, and find a long list of the wicked:—

‘Of wraggers¹ and wears²
A bag full of brefes;
Of carpars and cryars
Of mychers³ and thefes;
Of lurdans⁴ and lyars
That no man lefys;⁵
Of flytars,⁶ of flyars
And renderers of reffys;⁷
Of alkyn⁸ astates,
That go bi the gatys
Of poore pride, that god hates,
Twenty so many.’

¹ Wranglers.

² Noisy fellows.

³ Pilferers.

⁴ Good for nothing people.

⁵ Believes.

⁶ Scolds.

⁷ Thief-takers.

⁸ All-kind.

To these are added, by the demon whose business it was to make the entries in the Luciferan ledger,

‘Bakbytars,
And fals quest dytars.¹
I had no help of wrytars,
Bot thise two dalles.’²

*Tutivillus*³ then arrives, and he gives this account of himself and his duties:—

‘I was your chefe tollare,
And sithen courte rollar :
Now I am master Lollar,’

which establishes that the writer was an enemy of Wickliffe’s heresy, and probably an ecclesiastic: this part of the performance is therefore not older than the date when the early reformer gave disturbance to the Catholic church⁴. *Tutivillus*

¹ False inquest indicters.

² Daddles, *i. e.*, hands.

³ Mr Douce, who superintended the reprint of the *Judicium* for Mr. Towneley, when he presented it to the Roxburghe Club, derives the name of this fiend from *Titivilitium*, a word used by Plautus. The more simple and true etymology seems to be *totus* and *vilis*. We shall find that he forms an important personage in some of the Morals, or Moralities, which followed Miracle-plays.

The name afterwards came to mean any person with evil propensities: thus in *Rauf Royster Doyster*, Tom Titivile is spoken of as one of the hero’s lawless companions. Skelton, in his *Colin Clout*, abuses wicked priests who ‘talke like Titivelles’; and in his *Garlande or Chapelet of Lawrell*, he couples ‘Titivyllis’ with tumblers, dicers, and dancers. In the interlude of *Thersyles*, ‘Tytyfylles’, keep no better company—viz., ‘taberers, typlers, and taverners’.

⁴ Wickliffe died in 1384, and was in the full tide of his popularity between 1370 and 1380. The stat. 2 Henry IV, c. 15 was passed *contra Lollardos*; but the term Lollard was in use long before. Wilkin’s *Concilia*, iii, 202, contains a mandate of the Bishop of Worcester, dated 1387, against Lollard preachers, and persons, *nomine seu ritu Lollardorum confederati*.

produces his 'roll of ragman¹ of the round tabill' of the souls he had secured for hell, including,

'Fals jurars and usurars
To symony that clevys,
Hasardars and dysars,
Fals deeds forgars,
Slanderars, bakbytars'—

and in the course of his speech he gives a description of a lady whose head-dress is 'horned like a cove', a circumstance which may serve to fix the date of this part of the production.² It appears, by what falls from another devil, that wicked souls had recently come so thick and fast to the gate of hell, that the porter had had very hard work of it, and was 'up early and downe late'.

We then come to the judgment pronounced by the Sa-

¹ Wynkyn de Worde printed a poem, a fragment of which only has been recovered, called *Ragmannes Rolle* in the running title, and consisting of a list of good and bad women in alternate stanzas. *Ragman's Roll* is mentioned by J. Heywood, in his *Pardoner, Frere and Neighbour Pratt*, 1533. Mr. Douce says: 'it is used by old writers to express any legal instrument, and the etymology has been much disputed. Rageman is also a name given to the Devil, and in this place it may have that signification.'

² This horned head-dress was worn about the middle of the fifteenth century; and in *Harl. MS.* No. 2255, we meet with a poem, attributed to Lydgate, and written in the reign of Henry VII, which contains the subsequent stanza:—

'Clerkys recorde of gret auctorite
Hornys were gove to beestys for diffence:
A thyng contrary to femynyte
To be maad sturdy of resistance;
But arche wyves, egre in ther violence,
Fers as tygre for to make affray,
Lyst not of pryde ther hornys cast away.'

The poem is particularly directed against *female horns*, and the wearers.

viour; and after a speech, in the course of which he shows his wounds, he dismisses four good souls to heaven, and four 'cursid catyfs of Kaine's kyn' to hell. The good souls sing *Te Deum laudamus* and *Explicit Judicium*.¹ in other words, the pageant ends.

De Judicio extremo is the title of the Chester Pageant, Chester No. 24, and it is conducted as follows. After a speech Plays. from the Deity, *Papa Salvatus*, *Imperator Salvatus*, *Rex Salvatus* and *Regina Salvata* appear; and they are followed by *Papa damnatus*, *Imperator damnatus*, *Rex damnatus*, *Regina damnata*, *Iusticiarius damnatus*, and *Mercator damnatus*: the damned Pope (a remarkable character in a Roman Catholic Miracle-play) is made to say

'sylver and symonye
Made me pope unworthy,
That burnes me now full witterly;
For of blysse I am full bare.'

Then occurs the stage direction, that Jesus is to appear *quasi in nube, si fieri potest*: he makes a long address, and his wounds bleed afresh, after which the good are rewarded with bliss, and the bad punished with bale. Demons enter

¹ This ought probably to be the last of the Widkirk Pageants, as it is of those of Chester and Coventry, but in the manuscript it is followed by two others, *The Raising of Lazarus*, and what is called *Suspensio Judæ*. The first most likely belonged to the series, and having been omitted in the right place, it was inserted at the end. The second is in a different stanza, and certainly by a different hand: it is unfinished, and as far as it goes, it is a monologue by Judas, relating the events of his life—how his mother dreamed that she was brought to bed of a lump of sin, and how he was thrown into the sea and cast ashore on the island from which he derived his name: how the Queen of the island found him, and presented him to the King as her own offspring, until she became actually pregnant and produced a son. The leaves containing the rest of the narrative are wanting in the MS.

to seize the wicked, and the first demon lays peculiar stress on the guilt of the Pope and of the Judge: to the last he afterwards says,

‘A ! sir Judge, this goeth to righte ;
By Mahounde, moch of mighte,
You be myne eich wighte,
Ever to live in woo.’

The Devils *exportabunt eos*, and the four Evangelists conclude the whole of this series of pageants, by impressing upon the audience the truth of their gospels.

In the *Ludus Coventriæ*, the forty-second pageant is appropriated to ‘Doomsday’, and it commences by a summons from the archangels, Michael and Gabriel, to all ranks, Coventry Plays.

‘Both pope, prynce, and prysste with crowne,
Kynge and Caysere and Knyghts kene ;’

and according to the stage direction ‘*omnes resurgentes subitus terram clamant haaa, haaa, haaa !*’

‘Ha a a ! cleve a sundyr, ye clowdys of clay,
Asundyr ye breke, and lete us pas.
Now may oure song be wele away,
That evyr we synned in dedly trespas.’

After they have exclaimed ‘Harrow and out’, the Saviour sees the good waiting patiently for admission, and orders St. Peter to let in his ‘blyssyd childeryn’. The wicked beg for mercy, and *Primus Diabolus* tells them to expect none. The Saviour then shows how they had neglected all offices of charity, and the devils read the sins of the damned, as they are marked in black upon their foreheads: it is made an offence of the deepest dye, that they had attended neither mass nor matins. This piece is imperfect at the end, and the

last words of it are a repetition by the wicked of their exclamations for mercy.

At the conclusion of this analysis, we may mention that another copy of the Chester series of Miracle-plays has been preserved, which unquestionably once was the property of the family of Lord Chancellor Ellesmere, and has the name of Sir John Egerton, his son, inscribed upon it: how it escaped from the archives of the house we cannot explain, but when we saw it, it was in the hands of a gentleman of Cheshire, in which county the Ellesmeres are well known to possess large property. The MS. was transcribed by a person who signed himself Edward Gregorie, and who added the date of 1591; which is nine years older than any other known transcript of the same series of religious dramas.

It more nearly follows *Harl. MS.* No. 2013, than *Harl. MS.* No. 2124; but, nevertheless, preserves not a few of the peculiarities of the latter, and is, in our opinion, a more valuable relic than either, notwithstanding the unfortunate deficiency of the first play and 'the Banes'. As one proof of the variations it contains, and at the same time of their value, we may refer to the eighth play, where the 'boy and pig' are introduced in the stage direction of the *Harleian MSS.*, which we suspect meant that the boy was furnished with a pig's bladder at the end of a stick, with which he repeatedly struck Herod, in order to increase his rage and to excite the laughter of the spectators: in the MS. of 1591, Herod complains of the manner in which the boy troubled him:—

'This boye doth me so greatly anoye,
That I wax dull and pure dry:'

whereas, in both the *Harleian MSS.*, this point is lost by the misreading of the transcribers:—

'This *bost* doth me so greate nye,' etc.

The quantity of French is the same in all three MSS., and we may here notice, what we omitted before to remark, that Pilate opens the eighteenth play with a stanza, still preserved in what we take to be the original language of at least part of the performances: as, like the others, it is a mass of ignorant and almost unintelligible corruption, it is useless to quote it. Upon this subject we may, however, cite from this new authority, the following lines in the fourteenth Pageant,—a prayer that the King of France may not be exposed to treachery:—

‘And would god almightie,
The Kinge of France might so afye
In this realme and baronye,
That they were all so treu.’

The ‘realm and barony’ could be no other than the kingdom of France, from whence the piece had been imported, and in rendering which into English, the translator omitted to adapt it to the change of country. The stage directions in the MS. of 1591, are sometimes more full and explanatory than in either of the *Harleian* MSS. In the twenty-first Play we are told ‘Christ must speake in heaven’, and above what he says is written ‘Lyttle god’; as if there were two representatives of the Deity, one larger than the other, one, possibly, for the Father and the smaller for the Son. Most of the local and temporary allusions are preserved, particularly the singular speech of the female tavern-keeper at the close of the seventeenth Play in *Harl. MS.* 2013, when she is left in hell, after Christ has freed Adam, Eve, and the Prophets, because she had cheated her customers by selling them bad wine and in small measures: in modern language this would be termed a *clap-trap* for the audience.

THE DIGBY MIRACLE-PLAYS.

THE three Miracle-plays or Pageants, devoted to the Conversion of St. Paul (preserved among the *Digby MSS.* in the Bodleian Library), as far as regards that event, are conducted very scripturally, and in this respect present nothing requiring particular remark. The performances are opened and terminated by *Poeta*, in his own character, who delivers a kind of prologue and epilogue, in the latter of which he beseeches

‘yow all of hye and low degree,
Our sympylnes to hold excusyd, and lycens.’

St. Paul is first introduced on horseback, and after his conversion he enters in a ‘dyscypuls wede’.—Two devils are employed, called Belyal and Mercury, and the first seems to have been indulged with the unusual luxury of a seat: the stage-direction is, ‘Here to enter a Dyvel with thunder and fyre, and to avaunce hym sylfe, saying as folowyth; and his spech spokyn to syt downe in a chayre’.

Belyall.—Ho! ho! beholde me, the myghte prince of the parts
infernall,
Next unto Lucyfer I am in magestye;
By name I am nominate the god Belyall,
Non of more myghte, nor of more excellencye.’

After soliloquizing, he complains that he has of late heard
‘no news truly’,

‘Wherfor I long tyll I speke wyth my messenger Mercurye.’

The stage direction at which point is, 'Here shall entere another devyll, callyd Mercury, with a fyeryng, comyng in hast, cryeng and roryng'. He informs Belyal in dismay of the conversion of St. Paul, and expresses his conviction, that in consequence 'the devyl's law' will be 'clene downe layd', which tidings put Belyal also into the utmost alarm. After concerting, as a last resource, to stir up the Jewish Bishops, they both 'vanyse away, with a fyrye flame and a tempest'.

In this performance we hear of the employment of thunder, which must have been imitated by some noisy contrivance. The hand-writing of this MS. is of the reign of Henry VII.

The Miracle-play called *Oreginale de Sancta Maria Magdalena*, cannot perhaps be assigned to an earlier date, and it is on many accounts a singular production. It is clear, from its construction, that four stages or scaffolds must have been used for the representation, as the Emperor Tiberius, Herod, Pilate and the Devil have all their separate stations; and under that of the Devil was a contrivance for the infernal regions: 'here shal entyr the prynce of devylls in a stage, and helle ondyr neth that stage'. Mary Magdalen resides in a castle bequeathed to her by her father, who figures in the earlier part of the performance, and is called King Cyrus. A ship, belonging to St. Peter, is brought into 'the place', or intermediate space between the scaffolds, and some of the characters, including the heroine, make a voyage in it, and are supposed to sail a great distance: '*et tunc venit navis in placeam*' again, and the master mariner says;

'Loke forth, Grolbe, my knave,
And yf yow aspye ony land,
And tell me what tydyngs yow have.
Boy.—Into the shrowds I wol me hye;
And as I ondyrstand,
Be my faythe, a castyl I aspye.'

This is in fact the castle of Mary Magdalen. The ship seems a novel and curious addition to the stage properties at that time. The castle of Mary Magdalen is besieged by the Devil, aided by the Seven Deadly Sins, and as they are successful in their attack upon it, Lechery thus addresses her :—

‘Heyl, lady, most lawdabyll of alyauns !
 Heyl, orient as the sonne in his reflexite !
 Myche pepul be comfortyd be your benygnant affyauns :
 Bryter than the bornyd¹ is your bemys of bewte :
 Moste debonarius with your aungelly velycyte.’

Luxuria takes Mary to a tavern ; and the Taverner thus introduces himself :—

‘I am a taverner, wytty and wyse,
 That wynys have to sell gret plente.
 Of all the taverners I bere the pryse,
 That be dwellyng withinne the cete.
 Of wynys I have grete plente,
 Both whyte wyne and red that [is] so clere :
 Here ys wyne of mawt, and malmeseyn,
 Clary wyne and claret and other moo :
 Wyn of gyldyr, and of galls, that made at the groine,
 Wyn of wyan, and unage I seye also :
 Ther be no better as ferre as ye can goo.’

A gallant, named ‘Curiosity’, meets with Mary at the tavern, treats her to ‘sops and wine’, and finally seduces her. His address, on first coming in, is the following :—

‘Hof, hof, hof !² a frysh new galaunt :
 Ware of thryft, lay that adoune.
 What wene ye, syrrys, that I were a merchant,
 Be cause I am new com to town.

¹ Ought we not to read *morning*, the speaker having a cold in his head.

² In *Histriomastix* (a comedy printed in 1610) Posthaste, the poet of a

With praty tappysterys wold I fayne rownd.
I have a shert of Reynns with slevys pendaunt ;
A lase of sylke for my lady constaunt.'

Lazarus, who is represented as the son of Cyrus, is raised in the course of the piece, and the repentance of the heroine is conducted with all due attention to the authority of Holy Writ. Tiberius Cæsar and Herod both make long speeches upon their power and excellencies ; and the former, who is called Imperator, says in the commencement of the representation :—

'Tyberius Sesar, was power is potencyall,
I am ; the blod ryall most of soverente :
Of all emperours and kyngs my byrth is the best,
And all regeons obey my myty volunte.'

A parasite, of the name of Scrybyl (meaning, possibly, a *scribbler* or poet), flatters him on his personal appearance, and Tiberius well pleased observes,

'Now for thyne answe, Belyal blysse thy face,'

which, perhaps, was hideous, by way of contradiction. Herod 'makes his boast' (to use the words of the stage direction) in the same style, and subsequently goes to bed : 'Here the Kyng goth to bed in haste' ; but, as it seems, for no other purpose than to make room for fresh actors. There is nothing particularly worthy of remark in the conduct of the Devils, headed by Satan : a mock pagan mass to Mahound is performed about the middle of the play, in gibberish with Latin

travelling company of actors, writes a play on the story of the *Prodigal Child*, who enters with these lines :—

'Huffa, huffa, who callis for me?
I play the Prodigall Child in jollity.'

Other parts of the same piece are introduced, which were, perhaps, copied from some old religious play not now known.

terminations to the words, and ending with these four lines in English, spoken by a boy :

‘Hownds and hoggs in heggs and hells,
Snakes and toddeys mot be your bells,
Ragnal and Roffyn, and other in the wavys,
Graunt yow goe to dye on the galous.’

This benediction, it is to be observed, is invoked upon Herod and all the Pagans, including the priests at the altar. The three Kings of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, are among the *dramatis personæ*, but their parts are not prominent ; and a priest winds up the performance with the following lines, after the usual exhortation :—

‘Now, frends, thus endyt thys matere,
To blysse bryng you that byn here.
Now, clerkys, with woycys clere,
Te deum laudamus lett us syng.’

Explicit oreginale de sca Maria Magdalena.

To the whole piece the author adds this apology.

‘Yff ony thyng amysse be,
Blame connyng and nat me :
I desyer the redar to be my frynd,
Yff there be ony amysse yt to amend.’

That is, to blame not the Poet, but his want of skill or cunning, and to amend whatever is found amiss. There exists no trace of authorship in any part of this production.

To this drama succeeds that on the Slaughter of the Innocents, called *Childermas Day*; which was reprinted by Hawkins, in his *Origin of the English Drama*, under the misread title of *Candlemas Day* : in several places it bears the date of 1512, and John Parfre is twice mentioned as the ‘writer’ of it ; but he was probably the writer only in the sense of transcriber, and

not of author; although it should be noticed that none of the other pieces are similarly marked.

The last production, of a dramatic kind, in this curious volume is an imperfect copy of the Moral-play of *Mind, Will, and Understanding*, which forms the second piece in the *Macro MS.*, examined hereafter. They seem to be in the handwriting of the same transcriber in both copies; but, in the *Digby MS.* the performance only carries us to the entrance of the 'Quest of Holborn'. There is no material variation as far as the Digby manuscript extends, the existence of which has not hitherto been known.

We might easily carry farther an examination of the oldest forms of our national drama as preserved in manuscript, hitherto very imperfectly and superficially treated, but we have said enough to shew the peculiarities, both of their mechanical contrivance and literary composition.

PRINTED RELIGIOUS PLAYS.

CHRIST'S TEMPTATION, BY JOHN BALE.—LIFE AND REPENT-
ANCE OF MARY MAGDALEN.—KING DARYUS.—HISTORY
OF JACOB AND ESAU.—ABRAHAM'S SACRIFICE.—QUEEN
HESTER.

WARTON states that 'the fashion of acting Mysteries' (meaning Miracle-plays) appears to have expired with Bale,¹ who, probably, did not write anything of the kind after the year 1540: when we find, therefore, that Miracle-plays were acted very constantly at Chester until 1577, at Coventry until 1591, at York until late in the sixteenth century, at Newcastle until 1598, at Lancaster, Preston, and 'last of all at Kendall in the beginning of the reign of James I',² it can hardly be said that the fashion expired with Bale, who died in 1563. That Morals or Moral-plays (of the introduction of which more will be said in the proper place) had been encroaching upon and superseding them by degrees, from the reign of Henry VI, downwards, there can be no doubt, but it was long before they were entirely discontinued.³

¹ *Hist. Eng. Poet.*, iii, 362, edit. 8vo.

² Weever's *Funeral Monuments*, fol. 1631, p. 405: he says that he had seen them acted at Lancaster, Preston and Kendal after 1603.

³ Malone (*Shakespeare by Boswell*, iii, 333, n. 8) quotes the *Beehive of the Romishe Church*, 1580, to prove a fact not capable of dispute—viz., that 'Mysteries were occasionally represented in the early part of Queen Elizabeth's reign'; but he was apparently not aware that this work is only a translation from the German, and that it does not at all refer to the performance of Miracle-plays in England.

We shall now proceed to notice some dramatic pieces which have come down to us in a printed form, and which were obviously intended by their authors as improvements upon the old Miracle-plays.

John Bale¹ was the first to apply, or, perhaps, misapply the words 'tragedy' and 'comedy' to dramatic representations in English: he calls his *God's Promises* a tragedy, and his *Christ's Temptation* a comedy.² The proper designation of both unquestionably is Miracle-plays, and they differ in no essential respects from previous compositions of the same kind.

¹ Among the *Cotton. MSS.* (Cleop. E. iv) is a letter from Bale to Cromwell, where he calls himself a Doctor of Divinity, and 'late parish priest of Thorndon, in Suffolk'. He complains of persecutions by the Papists, who had instigated Lord Suffolk to throw him into prison: it is without date, and is thus subscribed:

20th of May 1534
John Bale

² Before the time of Bale, 'tragedy' was used to signify any serious narrative in verse: Chaucer's definition of it, in his *Monk's Tale*, is well known, and consistently with it Lydgate called his *Fall of Princes* a series of 'tragedies'. Late in the reign of Elizabeth, 'tragedy' was not exclusively applied to a theatrical performance: Churchyard wrote several elegies, which he terms 'tragedies'; and Markham, in 1595, published 'the tragedy of Sir Richard Grenville'. It is a heroic poem, in octave stanzas; and Malone, when he wrote his *Supplement* (i, p. 78), was not himself aware that it was not a tragedy, for he enumerates it among *plays* that had been lost in MS. The same was the case in Italy: in his treatise *Della volgare Eloquenza*, Dante says, *per tragediam superiorem stilum induimus*; and in humility he names his *Inferno comedia* (canto xxi), while in his admiration of Virgil he says, that the *Æneid* is *una tragedia* (canto xx). Boiardo, at a later date, speaks of his romance as a *comedy*, comparing it with Homer's *tragedy* the *Iliad*. See *Orlando Innamorato*, c. xlv, st. 8.

Four Miracle-plays (besides a very remarkable semi-historical and semi-religious drama of which we shall speak hereafter) by Bale, are extant:—1. *The three Laws of Nature, Moses, and Christ*; 2. *God's Promises*; 3. *John the Baptist's preaching in the Wilderness*; 4. *The Temptation of Christ*. Each of these, he states, that he 'compiled',¹ not merely because he borrowed his materials from the Old and New Testaments, but, possibly, because he adopted portions of pieces of the same description already existing. The subjects are treated as in the older specimens; and even in point of language and versification, Bale has not much the advantage of his predecessors. His four plays were printed abroad, in 4to, and it is to be remarked of them, that they contain the first extant attempts, by means of the stage, to promote the

¹ In his account of the writers of Great Britain (*Scriptor. Illust. M. Brit.* fol. Basil 1557, p. 702), he gives a list of his own dramatic works. The following clearly formed a series of the life of Christ:—

1. *Of Christ, when he was twelve years old*, one comedy.
2. *Of his Baptism and Temptation*, two comedies.
4. *Of Lazarus raised from the dead*, one comedy.
5. *Of the Councils of the Bishops*, one comedy.
6. *Of Simon, the Leper*, one comedy.
7. *Of the Lord's Supper and washing the feet*, one comedy.
9. *Of the Passion of Christ*, two comedies.
11. *Of the Sepulture and Resurrection*, two comedies.

Bale's miscellaneous dramas contain some very curious titles, and no doubt the pieces themselves, only one of which is extant, corresponded.

12. *Upon both marriages of the King (Henry VIII)*.
13. *Against Momus and Zoilus*.
14. *The Treacheries of the Papists*.
15. *Against the adulterators of God's word*.
16. *Of King John of England*.
17. *Of the impostures of Thomas à Beckett*.
18. *Of the corruptions of the Divine Laws*.
19. *The Image of Love*.

Reformation.¹ The second and third of Bale's dramatic productions have already been reprinted;² but the fourth is of extreme rarity, and, in connection with the present subject, requires distinct notice.

The *prefatio*, or prologue, to *Christ's Temptation*³ purports to have been spoken by the author himself, and it connects the 'Temptation' with the previous play of the 'Baptism' of the Saviour. Christ enters hungry in the wilderness, and in his address very appositely undertakes to confute the Catholic doctrine of the efficacy of fasting: Satan joins him in the disguise of a hermit; and the whole temptation is conducted in a very orthodox manner, according to the gospel of St. Luke. Being foiled in the two first attempts, Satan shews Christ all the kingdoms of the world, speaking of them as follows, in a style of rather exuberant description:—

¹ In *The Vocacyon of Johan Bale* (16mo. n. d. sign. C, 9) the author states, that the three last of his plays enumerated in the text were acted in succession at the Market-cross of Kilkenny, in August 1553, on the proclamation of Queen Mary, Bale not being then Bishop of Ossory; and he adds, that the representation was 'to the small contentation of the prestes and other papistes there', on account of the tenets enforced. Malone (*Shakespeare by Boswell*, iii, 31, n. 5) says that 'two of Bale's Mysteries' were then played, but, by his quotation from Bale, he himself shews that *three* were acted. In his *Expostulation or Complaynt* (printed by John Day, n. d.) Bale mentions his *Three Laws of Nature*, as having been printed six years before: he adds, in reference to its design and character,—'therin is it largely declared, how that faytheless Antichrist of Rome, with his clergy, hath bene a blemyshe, darkener, confounder, and poysoner of all wholsom laws'. I quote from a copy in the library of the late Mr. Douce.

² *John the Baptist's preaching in the Wilderness* will be found in vol. i of the last edition of the *Harleian Miscellany*: *God's Promises* is reprinted in the old and new editions of Dodsley's Old Plays.

³ The title runs thus:—'A brefe Comedy, or enterlude concernynge the temptacyon of our lorde and saver Jesus Christ by Satan in the desart. Compyled by Johan Bale. Anno MDXXXVIII.' 4to.

‘Lo, how saye ye now? is not here a pleasaunt sight?
 If ye wyll, ye maye here have all the worldes delyght,
 Here is to be seene the kyngedome of Arabye,
 With all the regyons of Affryck, Europe and Asye,
 And their whole delyghtes, their pompe, their magnificence,
 Their ryches, their honour, their welth, their concupyscence;
 Here is golde and sylver in wonderfull habundaunce,
 Sylkes, velvetes, tyssues, with wyne and spyces of plesaunce:
 Here are fayre women, of countenaunce ameable,
 With all kyndes of meates to the body dylectable:
 Here are camels, stoute horses, and mules that never wyll tyre,
 With so many pleasures as your hart can desyre.’

This is, perhaps, the only passage in which Bale shews any marked superiority, as a writer of verses, to the authors of some of the later additions to the *Ludus Coventriæ*. In the course of his argument, Satan makes various attacks upon ‘false priests and bishops’, and congratulates himself at last, that ‘the Vicar of Rome’ will worship him and be his friend. In the *conclusio*, or epilogue, Bale in his own person thus maintains the fitness of putting the Scriptures into the hands of the people, and very roundly abuses the Roman Catholics who would still keep them in ignorance.

‘What enemyes are they, that from the people wyll have
 The scriptures of God, whych are the myghty weapon
 That Christ left them here their soules from helle to save,
 And throw them headlondes into the devyls domynyon:
 If they be no devyls, I saye there are devyls non.
 They brynge in fastynge, but they leave out *Scriptum est*:
 Chalke they geve for gold, soch fryndes are they to the Beest.’

A fifth play by Bale, of a very remarkable character, has only recently been brought to light; and as it is, in its form and substance, quite unexampled, it is necessary to speak of it more distinctly and at large: it is, in fact, a mixture of

English history with religious doctrine, and the very earliest of its kind, applying the facts and incidents of the reign of King John to the purpose of promoting the Reformation under Elizabeth. Bale had commenced life as a Roman Catholic, and for some years had performed all the duties of a zealous priest; but seeing, as he thought, good reason to change his opinions he had become a protestant, and had endeavoured to promote the new doctrines with all the zeal of a convertite: his mind was vigorous and courageous, and very soon after, indeed before Queen Elizabeth came to the throne, he avowed that he had relinquished his earlier opinions. He had therefore been beneficed in Suffolk, and it was while he resided in that county, as a protestant pastor, that he wrote the drama under consideration. It was acted at Ipswich, and the original manuscript was discovered, not many years since, in the chest of the Corporation: the greater part of it is in the hand-writing of the author himself, and where he employed a scribe, he elaborately corrected the work with his own hand, so that it comes down to us in the most authentic shape. Of course it was not acted, nor, perhaps written, until after Elizabeth came to the throne, but Bale had so far ingratiated himself with the late King, that he made him Bishop of Ossory. However, he did not long fill the see, as it is certain that he was dead in 1564. The production before us is so remarkable, both in its form and subject, as a play intended to promote the Reformation, and as a singular mixture of drama and history of so early a date, that it is entitled to especial notice.

There are nineteen characters engaged in it, but the piece is so contrived that only six performers were necessary, some of them trebling and quadrupling their parts, a course that was inevitable when we remember of how few persons a company of players at that date usually consisted: thus the actor who

had the principal part, that of King John, by changing his dresses, qualified himself also for the character of England, who is represented as a widow, and for an inferior part called Clergy, the representative of the protestant divines of the kingdom. In the same way another actor had the treble part of Sedition (the Vice or Jester of the performance), and the character of Civil Order, and Stephen Langton; while a third player was charged with the four parts of the Commonalty of the Kingdom, Nobility, Cardinal Pandulphus, and a personage who is called Private Wealth. Dissimulation, Raymundus and Simon of Swinset, were in the hands of a fourth player; while the Pope, Usurped Power, Treason, Verity, and Imperial Majesty, were in the hands of the fifth member of the Company. Thus we see that most of the characters were either representative of particular classes or qualities, and that only five persons were intended to represent individuals of the period to which the history belongs.

The drama opens with a soliloquy by King John on the royal duties of his position, when England enters as a widow, and calls upon the monarch to redress the wrongs inflicted upon her by Roman Catholic Priests:—

‘Such lubbers as hath dysgised heads in their hoods,
Which in ydelnes do lyve by other men’s goods :
Monks, chanons and nones, in dyvers colour and shape,
Both whyght, black and pyed, God send their yncrease yll happe!’

These lines in the very outset display the spirit in which the whole piece is written. Sedition, however, enters and contradicts the accusations of the widow, while the King professes impartiality; and England withdraws somewhat assured and pacified: here we have a marginal direction in the MS., that England is to make her *exit* in order that she may dress for the part of Clergy, which the same actor is next to as-

sume. Sedition then, in a very long scene, perverts the King from his good purpose, denying all the accusations of England, while Nobility, Civil Order, and Clergy, who next appear, still farther mislead the King, until he seems lost to all sense of justice and good government. Clergy is enraged because the King requires their aid to support the expenses of government :—

‘Yf he contynew, we are lyke in a while to starve ;

He demaundeth of us the tenth parte of our lyvyng!’

which they swear ‘by sweet Jesus’ they will never pay, and exhort Nobility to assist them in their resistance. While this discussion is proceeding, Dissimulation enters singing the litany, or rather a profane mockery of it, ending with,

‘*A Johanne rege iniquo libera nos, Domine*’;

in which prayer all present fervently join, and enter into a long discussion how to defeat the King in his just designs : the conspirators finally bring in Usurped Power—an impersonation of the authority of the Pope—and when he asks Dissimulation—

‘But tell me one thyng : Dost thou not preach the gospell?’

the answer at once is—

‘No, I promyse you : I defye it to the devill of hell.’

Bale is never choice in his expressions, whether upon profane or pious topics, and, indeed, seems to prefer coarseness to any kind of theatrical decorum. In a discussion as to the best friends of the Pope, Usurped Power insists that—

‘Thowse Yrysh men are ever good to the Church [kirk] :

When King’s disobey yt, then they begynne to work ;’

but Sedition adds,

‘By the mass, and that is not worth a rottyn warden,’

meaning, of course, a rotten warden-pear. Just afterwards we arrive at the following stage-direction, ‘Here go out

Usurped Power, and Private Wealth, and Sedition : Usurped Power shall dress for the Pope : Private Wealth for a Cardynall, and Sedition for a Monke. The Cardynall shall bring in the crosse, and Steven Launton the bell, booke, and candle.'

Near the end of one division of the drama, a character called 'The Interpreter' makes an explanatory speech, but it hardly seems necessary ; and on the re-entry of the Pope and Sedition we have some rather dull mockery of Roman Catholic ceremonies. It is then resolved to carry still farther the revolt against King John, who makes a tedious soliloquy and welcomes the Pope's emissaries and conspirators : they finally persuade John to submit, while his poor Commonalty (represented as old and blind) can make no resistance. The arrival of Cardinal Pandulphus occasions the Papists 'to blow out their trumpets', and poor Commonalty at once submits. The character called England now enters on the scene, and in her presence, rather than with her consent, King John resigns his crown into the hands of the Cardinal. Here occurs a break in the old MS., and it is by no means clear that a part of it was not originally abstracted as objectionable ; but in the the next scene Treason appears, and the transference of the kingdom to the Pope is completed, King John declaring,

'Agaynst holy Church I will no more speake nor look.'

The poisoning of the King by Dissimulation, soon follows, and John, in agony, declares that after all 'there is no malice to that of the Clergy' ; and we are finally introduced to Imperial Majesty, who assumes all power, and restores general subordination through the various ranks of society : he says :—

'Then, I trust, we are at a very good conclusion,
Vertue to have place and vyce to have confusion :
Take Verity with you for every act ye doo ;
So shall ye be sure not out of the way to goo.'

The drama seems thus concluded, but for the sake of laughter Sedition is again brought forward, singing :—

‘Peepe ! I see ye : I am glad I have spyed ye ;’

but so disguised that, at first, nobody recognises him : when he is known, a gallows is produced, and, anticipating his fate, he exclaims,

‘I would I were now at Rome at the sygne of the cuppe,
For heavynesse is dry !—Alas ! must I needs clymbe up ?
Pardon my life, and I shall tell you all ;
Both what is past, and that will hereafter fall.’

The nature of his confession may easily be imagined, and Sedition is hanged (though there is no express direction of the sort) before the whole audience, while calling upon St. Thomas à Beckett and St. Patrick to rescue him from his protestant enemies.

Such, in fact, is the conclusion of the play, excepting that King John is restored in the exalted character of Imperial Majesty, and that Queen Elizabeth, as usual, is prayed for ; but with the singular addition of her offspring, under the supposition that she obtains a husband.

On the whole it may be considered in our day a tedious performance ; but as it unites the two characters of a religious Miracle-play and of a historical drama, it is a very important feature in the progress of our national stage : it may almost be said to form an epoch of itself.

Several dramas were written and printed about this period upon separate stories and incidents in the Bible, complete in themselves, and apparently represented without reference to any other pieces which might precede or follow them. One of the most remarkable of these is *The Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalen*, which came from the press of John Charlewood, in 1567, and, as the title-page expresses, was

made by 'the learned clerk Lewis Wager'.¹ It contains no attacks, direct or indirect, upon Catholics or Protestants, and, judging from the style, it would seem to have been written after the Reformation had been completed. The following quotation from the prologue proves that it was represented by common itinerant players, and that it had been performed even at one of the universities:—

'We, and other persons, have exercised
This comely and good facultie a long season,
Which of some have been spitefully despised,
Wherefore I thinke they can alleage no reason. . .
I marvell why they should detract our facultie :
We have ridden and gone many sundry waies ;
Yea, we have used this feate at the Universitie,
Yet neither wise nor learned would it dispraise ;
But it hath been perceived ever before our daies,
That foles love nothing worse than foles to be called :
A horse will kick, if you touch where he is galled.'²

This production, and others which will be noticed presently,

¹ Its full title is as follows :—'A new Enterlude, never before this tyme imprinted, entreating of the Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene : not onely godlie, learned and fruitefull, but also well furnished with pleasaunt myrth and pastyme, very delectable for those which shall heare or reade the same. Made by the learned clarke Lewes Wager. The names of the Players [fourteen in number, at the end of which we read] Foure may easely play this Enterlude. Imprinted at London by John Charlewood, dwelling in Barbican, at the signe of the halfe Eagle and the key. Anno 1567.' Excepting in story, there is no resemblance between this production and the *Oreginale de sca Maria Magdalena*, among the Digby manuscripts in the Bodleian.

² By the following lines it may be gathered that the contributions of the spectators, for the payment of the performers and for the expenses of the exhibition, were voluntary :—

'Truly I say, whether you give halfpence or pence,
Your gaine shall be double before you part hence.'

show that a character which figured much more frequently and importantly in *Morals*—the Vice—was also introduced into religious plays of a later date, In *The Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalen* he is called Infidelity; and as the paramour of the heroine he assumes various disguises (aided by Pride, Cupidity, and Carnal-concupiscence), in order to seduce her to every species of guilt. The following dialogue between Mary, Infidelity, Pride, Cupidity, and Carnal-concupiscence, may be taken as an amusing specimen of the lighter parts of a performance, of no inconsiderable talent.

Pride.—Let your eies roll in your head, declaring your pride :
After this sort you must cast your eies aside.

Mary.—How thinke you by this manner of countenance ?

Pride.—Convenient for such as be not of your acquaintance.

Cupidity.—I doubt not but she will do right well hir part,
By that time that we be fast within hir hart.

Carnal-conc.—Marke the garments of other in any wise,
And be you sure of one of the newest guise.
Your haire, me thynke, is as yellow as any gold ;
Upon your face layd about have it I wold ;
Sometime on your forehead the breadth of an hand :
Sometime let your attire upon your crowne stand,
That all your haire for the most part may be in sight.
To many a man a fayre haire is a great delight.

Infidelity.—In sommer time now and then to kepe away flies,
Let some of that faire haire hang in your eies.
With a hotte nedle you shall learne it to crispe,
That it may curle together in maner like a wispe.

Mary.—By my treuth, you are a merrie gentleman :
I will follow your counsell as much as I can.'

They go on to advise her to ornament her hair 'with pretie tricks and toyes' and if it begin to change colour, to get a dye of some goldsmith to restore it: if her cheek should

fade, they tell her to repair to a painter, who will make her still appear 'with a lusty courage'. The Law, Faith, Repentance, Knowledge-of-sin, Justification, and Love, are also personified in the drama, and co-operate with the Saviour and Simon the leper. The last half of the piece (which fills sixty closely-printed pages) is occupied with the reclaiming and conversion of the Magdalen, after she has reached the climax of vice, and after Infidelity has advised her with success 'not to make two hells instead of one', but to live merrily in this world, since she is sure of being condemned in the next. Christ finally expels the seven devils, who 'roar terribly', while Infidelity and his associates abandon all farther efforts. After a dinner in the house of Simon, the Saviour declares:—

'Woman, I say, thy faith hath saved thee : go in peace.
Now art thou pacified in thy conscience.
Through thy faith I doe all thy sinnes release,
Assuring thee to have mercy for thy negligence.'

The performance is concluded by a short dialogue between Mary, Justification, and Love, the two last triumphing in the salvation of such a sinner.

In point of date, when it issued from the press, another religious play, in which also the Vice is introduced, should have been mentioned first; but it is exceedingly inferior in construction and language: it is called the interlude of *King Darius*,¹ and it was printed for T. Colwell in 1565.² The story

¹ In various passages popery is strongly reviled, and the prayer at the close mentions Queen Elizabeth by name.

² The following is its title: 'A Pretie new Enterlude, both pithie and pleasaunt, of the Story of Kyng Daryus, Beinge taken out of the third and fourth Chapter of the thyrd booke of Esdras. The names of the Players [twenty in number, at the end of which we read] Syxe persons may easely play it. Imprynted at London in Flete-streat, beneath the Conduite, at the sygne of S. John Evangelist, by Thomas Colwell. Anno Domini M.D.LXV. In October.'

to which it relates is found in the third book of *Esdras*, c. iii and iv, sometimes not included even in the *Apocrypha* of our Bible. A question is proposed by Darius, 'What is strongest?' *Stipator Primus* answers, 'Wine'; *Stipator Secundus*, 'the King'; and Zorobabell, 'Women'; each making a speech in support of his opinion. This discussion constitutes the whole action (if it can be so called) of the scriptural portion of the play; and of the language, the subsequent quotation from the speech of Zorobabell, bad as it is, is a favourable specimen.

'Swyfte is the course of the Sunne,
The moone, the starres also,
Whych in the day theyr course do runne,
Wyth planets other mo.
He fetcheth his course rounde aboute,
The compas of one day,
The starres, the moone, and eke the night,
Theyr compasse do not staye.
He then is very excelente,
That causeth thys to be done,
Whych sytteth above the Fyrmament
Wythin hys holy throne.'

The comic portion of the piece is merely introductory of, though unconnected with, the rest. 'Iniquity, the Vice', with his usual wooden dagger, is there an important personage, and opens the performance:—

'How now, my maisters! how goeth the world now?
I come gladly to talke with you.'

Afterwards, assisted by Importunity and Partiality, he has various verbal and personal contests with Equity, Charity, and Constancy: at first, Iniquity and his friends are triumphant; but at last his three opponents catch the Vice alone, and the following occurs:—

Constancy.—Go gyt thee awaye and make no more a do,
For if you wyll not, I will compell you.

Charytie.—You do well : God's blessynge on your harte,
We wyll surely put hym to smarte,

Equytie.—That is ryght and juste for to do,
In the whych dede I consent to you.

[*Here sombody must cast fyre to Iniquytie.*

Constancy.—For thy wyckednes thou shalte have thys,
As thou hast deserved for thy doinges, ywysse.
Gyt thee away, and tary not here.

Iniquytie.—Nay, I go to the devil, I feare. [And goeth out.

Constancy.—Praysed be God,
That wyth his rod,
Whych is upryght,
Hath thys man dystroyed,
And clene abhorred,
In his malyce and spyte.'

It is to be concluded, that combustibles had been placed about the dress of the Vice, that they might explode for the amusement of the spectators.

The 'new, merry, and witty comedy or interlude' of *Jacob and Esau* presents some farther features of novelty.¹ It was printed in 1568, but perhaps it was written while Queen Mary was on the throne, as a piece under the same title was entered on the books of the Stationers' Company in 1557. It is a regularly-constructed play, divided into five acts and various scenes, and all the characters are scriptural, excepting the

¹ The following is the title : 'A newe mery and wittie Comedie or Enterlude, newly imprinted, treating upon the Historie of Jacob and Esau, taken out of the xxvij chap. of the first book of Moses, entituled Genesis. The partes and names of the Players, who are to be consydered to be Hebrews, and so should be apparailled with attire, [eleven in number]. Imprinted at London by Henrie Bynneman, dwelling in Knightrider streate, at the signe of the Mermayde. Anno Domini 1568.'

following :—Ragau, servant to Esau ; Midö, a boy who leads blind Isaac ; Hanon and Zethar, two of his neighbours ; Abra, a girl who assists Rebecca ; and Debora, an old nurse. Here, therefore, we find nothing allegorical ; and, as a proof that the author was anxious that unusual decorum should be observed in the representation of this play, it may be mentioned, that he has appended a note to the list of persons, stating that they ‘are to be considered to be Hebrews, and so should be apparelled with attire’.

It is opened by Ragau, servant to the hunter Esau, who, ‘with his horn at his back and his hunting-staff in his hand, leadeth three greyhounds, or one, as may be gotten’. His master arrives, and they proceed to the chase, while Rebecca urges Jacob to obtain his brother’s birthright. In the second act Esau and his man return ravenously hungry, and Jacob refuses to relieve his brother with a mess of ‘red rice pottage’, unless he will relinquish his birthright. Esau consents, and is ridiculed by Ragau for his simplicity, while Jacob, Rebecca, and Abra sing a psalm of thanksgiving. The blessing of Jacob takes place in the fourth act, Ragau and Esau having again gone out to hunt in the third. To please Isaac, Rebecca dresses a kid (instead of venison, which Esau had promised) so daintily, that, as she expresses it, ‘it shall say, Come, eate me’ ; and the artifice succeeds. Esau returns, and hears from his father what had passed in his absence, and the conclusion accords with the narrative in Genesis.

Whoever might be the author of this production (for it is anonymous), he has left us a drama in every respect much superior to anything of the kind which preceded it. The plot is regularly constructed, with the observance of the unities of time, place, and action ; the characters are well discriminated and contrasted, and the versification, for the time, forcible and flowing. Where it could be done, the author has had the

good taste to adopt, as nearly as possible, the simple but striking language of Scripture; and in order to do so more exactly, it will be observed, that in the subsequent brief extract from what passes between Isaac and Esau after the success of Jacob, he has made 'father' rhyme with 'father', 'have' with 'have', and 'servant' with 'servant':—

Esau.—Ah, Jacob, Jacob! that thou hast me thus undone!
Oh unhappie happe! Oh misfortune! well away,
That ever I should live to see this wofull day.
But hast thou one blissing and no mo, my father?
Let me have also some blessing, good swete father.

Isaac.—Well, nature pricketh me some remorse on thee to have.
Behold, thy dwelling place the earthe's fatnesse shall have,
And the dew of heaven, which doune from above shall fall,
And with dint of sworde thy living get thou shall;
And to thy brother Jacob thou shalt be servant.

Esau.—Oh! to my yonger brother must I be servant?
Oh, that ever a man should be so oppressed!

The comic portions of the play do not depend for their humour merely upon their coarseness: in the following instance the wit is rather refined, and it might make a point even in a modern comedy. Blind Isaac is about to go out, and says:—

'Well, come on: let us goe.

Mido.—And who shall leade you? I?

Rebecca.—No; it is my office, as long as I am by:

And I woulde all wives, as the worlde this day is,
Woulde unto their husbandes likewise do their office.

Mido.—Why, dame Rebecca, then all wedded men shold be blind.

Rebecca.—What! thou foolishe lad, no such thing was in my minde.'

The following song, one of the earliest specimens of the kind in a religious play, is not without point. It is sung by

old Debora, the nurse, while she is making preparations for Isaac's repast. The burden of it is a proverb :—

' It hath bene a proverbe before I was borne,
Yong doth it pricke that wyll be a thorne.¹

Who will be evill, or who will be good,
Who geven to truth or who to falshood,
Eche bodies youth sheweth a great likelihood ;
For yong doth it pricke that will be a thorne.

Who so in youth will no goodnesse embrace,
But folow pleasure, and not vertue's trace,
Great mervaile it is if such come to grace ;
For yong doth it pricke that will be a thorne.

Suche as in youth will refuse to be tought,
Or will be slacke to worke as he ought,
When they come to age, their prooffe will be nought ;
For yong doth it pricke that will be a thorne.

If a childe have bene given to any vice,
Except he be guided by such as be wyse,
He will therof all his lyfe have a spice ;
For yong doth it pricke that will be a thorne.'

Among early printed religious plays, a short notice of a performance of the kind, clothed in an English dress by Arthur Golding, the first translator of Ovid, ought not to be omitted. It was written by Beza, and performed at Lausanne (whence the address to the reader is dated) about the year 1550; and Golding, who entitles it *The Tragedie of Abraham's Sacrifice*, does not appear to have added a single line of his own, merely giving it in such a form that it might

¹ It is met with, among many other places, in Lily's *Woman in the Moon*, 1597, act iii. Tellus says :—' But timely, madame, crookes that tree that will be a camocke, and yong it prickes that will be a thorne.'

be represented in this country: he completed his version, as we are informed on the title-page, in 1575, but it was not published until two years afterwards.¹ The prologue, which is in couplets, opens thus:—

‘God save you every chone, both great and small,
Of all degrees: right welcom be you all.
It is now long, at least as seemes me,
Since here such preace² together I did see.
Would God we might, each weeke through all the yeare,
See such resort in Churches as is here.
Ye, Gentlemen and Ladies, I ye pray,
Give eare and harken what I have to say.’

After a dialogue between Abraham and Sarah, and a song by them in praise of the Creator, Satan enters ‘in the habit of a Monke’, and in a long soliloquy dwells with peculiar satisfaction on the mischief he had done the world in that disguise. He stands aside, while Abraham receives the heavenly command, while a company of shepherds sing in parts, and while Abraham and Isaac take leave of Sarah. Rejoicing in the conviction that Abraham will prove disobedient, the fiend watches during the whole process of the sacrifice, and speaks aside. In this scene between the father and the son, there is nothing so pathetic, or dramatic, as what has already been quoted from MS. Miracle-plays (p. 91): the following is decidedly the best part of it:—

¹ A fac-simile MS. copy of this most rare production, is in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire: the title runs thus:—‘A Tragedie of Abraham’s Sacrifice, Written in french by Theodore Beza, and translated into English by A. Golding. Finished at Powles Belchamp, in Essex, the xj of August, 1575. Gen. 15, Rom. 4. Abraham beleved God, and it was imputed to him for righteousnes. Imprinted at London by Thomas Vautrouillier; dwelling in the Blacke Friers. 1577.’

² *Preace* is press or crowd.

Abra.—Alas, my sonne ! God hath commaunded me
To make an offring unto him of thee ;
To my great greef, to my great greef and pine,
And endlesse wo.

Isaac.—Alas, poor mother mine,
How many deathes shall my death give to thee !
But tell me yit, my killer who shall be ?

Abra.—Who, my deere son ? my God, my God graunt grace,
That I may dy now present in this place.

Isaac.—O, father mine !

Abra.—Alas, no whit that name
Agrees to me. Yit should we be to blame
If we obeyd not God.

Isaac.—Sir, I am redy.

Satan.—Who would have thought he would have bin so stedic ?

Isaac.—Now then, my father, well I see in deede,
That I must dye. Lord, help me at my neede !

Abraham, unable to strike, drops the knife, again summons his resolution, and is at last about to kill his son, when the angel enters, and merely tells him to put the knife into its sheath. This, in fact, is the only incident, unless we include the subsequent sacrifice of a sheep instead of Isaac. 'The conclusion' shews that the piece was publicly acted :

'The lively faith set foorth before our eye
In Abraham, that holy personage,
Whose dooings have bin playd upon this stage ;
Lo, maisters ! heere the happie recompence
Which God doth give you for your gentle silence.'

Thus we see that this 'tragedy' is of the simplest possible construction, and it was probably only one of a series, although Golding translated no others, either upon the events of the Old or of the New Testament.

The 'new interlude' of *Godly Queene Hester*,¹ 1561, deserves remark, because the person, who may be said to represent the Vice in it, is neither more nor less than a professed jester called Hardy-dardy, who assumes weakness of intellect for the sake of giving the greater effect and licence to what he utters: he appears also to have been dressed in a fool's coat, and this circumstance is of itself important. He offers himself as a servant to Haman (or Aman, as he is called), who says,

'Me seemes ye are not fyte.

Hardy-dardy.—Ye wene I lacke wytte, it may well be so;

Ye, a fole, when it doth happe, may somtyme chaunce to stoppe
a gappe.

When wyse men wyll not mell.²

Aman.—Fooles largely will bourde, and tell al theyr thought.

Hardy-dardy.—And wyse men will not speke one worde, till all
become to nought.

Aman.—Fooles will tell all, and that trobleth sore.

Hardy-dardy.—And wyse men will say nought at al, till al be gone
and more.

Aman.—Fooles to idlenes all wayes be preste.³

¹ The only copy ever seen of this very singular performance is in the library of the Duke of Devonshire: the full title runs as follows:—'A new enterlude, drawen oute of the holy scripture of godly queene Hester, verye necessary; newly made and imprinted, this present yere MDLXI.

'Com nere, vertuous matrons and women kind,
Here may ye learne of Hesters duty;
In all comelines of vertue you shal finde
How to behave your selves in humilitie.

'The names of the players—The Prologue, King Assuerus, iii gentlemen, Aman, Mardocheus, Hester, Pursuevant, Pryde, Adulation, Ambition, Hardy-dardy, a Jewe, Arbona, Scriba.'

The colophon is this:—'Imprynted at London by Wyllyam Pickerynge and Thomas Hacket, and are to be solde at theyre shoppes.'

² 'When wise men will not meddle.'

³ Ready.

Hardy-dardy.—And wyse men use such busines, it were better they were at rest.'

Just afterwards *Hardy-dardy* observes,

'Some wise man must be fayn sumtime to take the paine
To do on a foole's cote;'

referring to his own characteristic apparel: yet he is learned enough to quote Ovid and Valerius Maximus in one of his answers to king Ahasuerus:

'Have ye not rede of Naso Ovide,
That eloquent Poet;
Nor Valery, which telles merely
The proper feates,
How the Smith Perillus, like a tuta vilus,
Made a bull of bras.
He had thought, iwis, to have pleased king Phalaris,
But yet he did much worse.'¹

The story is treated scripturally, (and the title-page professes that it is 'drawen oute of the holy scripture'), as far as relates to Hester, Mordecai, Ahasuerus, and Haman; but various other characters, some of them allegorical, as Pride, Adulation, and Ambition, are introduced: these three make their 'testament', bequeathing all their evil qualities to Haman, and they ultimately occasion his destruction. The play has a prologue of two seven-line stanzas, after which King Ahasuerus is discovered 'sitting in a chaire, speaking to his counsell'; and three courtiers having discussed, at some length, the comparative merits of riches, power, wisdom,

¹ A Jew in this play is made to refer to Virgil:—

'The Mantuans thought it a great punishment
To be proscribed from theyre goodes and lande,
As reciteth Virgill, that poet eloquente:
Much more is our payne, ye may understande', etc.

virtue, and noble blood, the King sends out a pursuivant to bring before him all the fair maidens of his kingdom, in order that he may choose one and marry. He selects Hester, and she makes several long speeches, to prove her wisdom and fitness for the exalted rank she is destined to fill: the following is one of them, when Ahasuerus requires her to shew how a kingdom is to be governed with 'truth, justice, law, and equity'.

'Then I wyl be playne, for veritie hath no pere,
And for a pryncipall of thys my tale,
And eke his subjectes, both great and smale,
In honour and wealth: yea all the province,
So riche and so stronge, that they maye convince
All their enemyes where so ever they dwell,
That woulde invade, resiste, or rebell.

'And where goddes servyce and hospitalitie
Doeth decaye, and almes to the poore all,
There may be wealth in places two or three,
But I assure you, the most part in generall
Neither have meate nor money, nor strength substantial,
Fytte to do you service when ye have nede;
Whiche is no good order, me thynkes in very dede.

'Let God alwaye, therfore, have hys parte,
And the poore fedde by hospitalitie,
Eche man his measure, be it pynte or quarte,
And no man to muche, for that is great jeoberdie,¹
A meane to lose all, as I doe feare me;
For when all is gathered together on a heape,
It may sone be conveyed, cariage is good cheape.
Thys I speake with trew hearte and mynde,
Beseching your grace to take it in good kynde.'

¹ Jeopardy, or danger.

After her elevation to the throne, Hester has 'a chapel royal' to delight her with music, and the members of it are called in and sing to her, as was not unusual with Queen Elizabeth; and although the scene is laid in Assyria, the personal, local, and temporary allusions are numerous. Ambition, in one place, speaks of the danger of a war with Scotland or France, and Hardy-dardy mentions that he gets his wine from the latter. The usual place of execution, at St. Thomas à Watrings, in London, is more than once introduced. The King writes an epistle to his vicegerents in distant parts of his kingdom, and he dates it the 4th December, 'the iii yeare of our raine', the piece having been printed in the third year of the reign of Elizabeth. The dialogue, when Haman is sent out to be hanged, contains an allusion to the performance of Pageants or plays at that date. Ahasuerus is talking with Hardy-dardy, after Haman has been led out to execution:

Assewerus.—What meane you by this?

Hardy-dardy.—I wyll tell you, by gis,¹ my hole intencion.

I meane my master is the first taster
Of his owne invencion.

The gallhouse he made both hye and brode,
For Mardocheus he them mente,
And now he is faine him selfe for certaine
To play the fyrst pagente.'

At the close the King thus addresses himself to the auditory:—

'My Lordes, by this fygure ye may well se,
The multitude hurte by the heades necligence,
If to his pleasure so geven is he,
That he will no paine take, nor dilligence:

¹ 'By gis' is a common abbreviation of *By Jesus*.

Who careth not for his cure ofte loseth credence,
A proverbe of olde sume time in usage :
Few men that serve but for theyr owne advauntage.'

Hester makes a short speech of a similar kind, and the characters end the piece by a prayer for the 'company' present during the performance.

Having thus spoken, perhaps sufficiently, of dramas of a merely biblical and religious character, we proceed to other dramas of a more general and popular description.

MORALS, OR MORALITIES.

INTRODUCTION.

THE word 'Morality', applied to a dramatic representation, like the word 'Mystery', is of comparatively recent introduction into our language. The terms employed by our ancestors, when they wished to designate this species of abstract allegorical performance, as distinguished from plays founded upon scripture history, were 'Moral' and 'Moral-play';¹ and they have reference to the nature of the production itself, in which some ethical precept is usually enforced and illustrated.

A Moral, or Moral-play, is a drama, the characters of which are allegorical, abstract, or symbolical, and the story of which is intended to convey a lesson for the better conduct of human

¹ They are used in the accounts of the Revels at an early date: *Every-man*, printed by Pynson, is said, on the title-page, to be 'a Moral-play'; and Lupton calls his *All for Money*, 1578, 'a Moral'. At a later period, 1590, we meet with 'the pleasant and stately Moral' of *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*; and in the licence to Hemmings and others, in 1619, Moral is still particularized as a species of entertainment, distinct from tragedy, comedy, history and pastoral. As the generic term *play* was often used to signify any species of dramatic exhibition, so the word *Moral* was sometimes applied in a wider sense than properly belongs to it. In the following passage from Rowley's *When you see me you know me*, 1605, it is used for a romantic Miracle-play—'King Arthur and his knights of the round table, that were buried in armour, are alive again, crying St. George for England! and mean shortly to conquer Rome: marry, this is thought to be but a *Moral*.'

life. It has been shewn, that abstract impersonations by degrees found their way into Miracle-plays, although in their origin they only dramatised certain scriptural events by the characters historically concerned. The change was designed to give these pieces a degree of attractiveness they would not have possessed, if year after year they had been repeated to the same audiences precisely in the same form. Among the first innovations of this sort were the representatives of *Veritas*, *Iustitia*, *Pax*, and *Misericordia* in 'the Parliament of Heaven', which constitutes part of the eleventh play or pageant of the *Ludus Coventriæ*. *Death*, in the same series, was a subsequent improvement, and the *Mother of Death*, a still later addition ; until at length such characters as *Reufin* and *Lyon* were employed, partaking of greater individuality, though still personifying the feelings and passions which are supposed to have actuated the Jews.

As such characters became more numerous, they interfered, to a certain degree, with the action and progress of the plot : scriptural characters in some pieces fell into the background, and sank into comparative insignificance ; and thus in process of time what was originally intended to be a poetical embellishment to a sacred drama, became a new species of theatrical exhibition, unconnected with bible-history. This was called a Moral, or Moral-play ; and while it consisted of mere allegory and abstraction, unenlivened by mental or personal idiosyncrasy, by varied incident, and by temporary allusion, it must have been a very wearisome, and often unintelligible exhibition, ill calculated for a popular assembly.

If, therefore, this kind of drama were to exist at all, it could not exist long supported only by mere abstractions : accordingly, in the very earliest specimens that have reached the present day, we find efforts made, with more or less success, to render them amusing as well as instructive, by conveying

the ethical lesson of the piece in a varied and inviting form : it was only, in fact, by abandoning the original plan, that this object could be accomplished. Thus deviations from the first design of Miracle-plays, by the employment of allegory, led to the performance of Moral-plays ; and deviations from Moral-plays, by the relinquishment of abstraction for individual character, paved the way, by a natural and easy gradation, for tragedy and comedy, the representations of real life and manners.

Supposing this view of the subject well founded, it is unnecessary to resort to the hypothesis of Warton, that 'Moralities' (as he and some others term them) owed their origin to the speaking characters which, in the reign of Henry VI, and subsequently, addressed monarchs from temporary scaffolds on their entrance into large towns and cities.¹ Those characters were historical as well as allegorical,² and yet it is not pretended, that historical personages, unconnected with the events of Scripture, figured upon our stage until more than a century after allegorical abstractions were first employed.

Malone was 'inclined to think' that our first 'Morality' was not older than the time of Edward IV ;³ but some manuscript productions of this class have recently been discovered, which show that early in the reign of Henry VI, Morals were in a state of considerable advancement. The opinion of Warton,

¹ *Hist. Engl. Poet.*, iii, 37, edit. 8vo.

² When Henry VII on one occasion entered Coventry, he was addressed not only by Righteousness, Temperance, Strength, Prudence, etc., but by Hector, Alexander the Great, Arthur, Charlemaine, St. Edward, Julius Cæsar, and Godfrey of Bollogne. See the pageants at Coventry appended to the *Tailor's and Sheermen's Plays*, as printed by Sharp in 1817.—*Cotton. MS. Julius B*, xii, shews, that when Henry VII entered Bristol, during one of his progresses, he was addressed from a scaffold by a performer who represented King Henry VI.

³ Malone's *Shakespeare by Boswell*, iii, 30.

that they reached the highest perfection of which they are capable while Henry VII was on the throne, is probably not to be disputed, though they subsequently acquired a greater degree of complication by the addition of characters, and exhibited more labour and ingenuity in their construction. A company of actors in the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII in general only consisted of four or five persons, and by doubling or trebling some of the parts, they were capable of performing the dramatic entertainments then in fashion.¹ The greater complication of Morals will be illustrated hereafter in the course of an examination of the structure of some of the pieces exhibited.

Independent of allegorical personages, there were two prominent characters in Moral-plays, regarding which it is necessary to speak, as some misunderstanding has existed respecting them. We allude to the Devil and the Vice.

The Devil was no doubt imported into Moral-plays from the old Miracle-plays, where he figured so amusingly, that when a new species of theatrical diversion had been introduced, he could not be dispensed with: accordingly, we find him the leader of the Seven Deadly Sins, in one of the most ancient Moral-plays that have been preserved. He was rendered as hideous as possible by the mask and dress he wore;

¹ This was, however, by no means invariably the case, and some of our most ancient Morals would require many actors for their representation: perhaps, in these instances, the common players obtained extraneous assistance, such as was given at Thetford in the reign of Henry VIII, by the members of the Priory. The custom of composing pieces so that one actor might undertake two, or even three, characters, continued until late in the reign of Elizabeth. In the MS. historical play of *Sir Thomas More*, which was probably written about 1590, the actors of Cardinal Wolsey are spoken of as only 'four and a boy'. Henry VIII was the first of our monarchs who entertained eight performers, but they formed two separate companies, the new and the old players, and we do not know that they ever acted in conjunction.

and from Ulpian Fulwell's *Like will to Like*, 1568 (and from other sources of the same kind which need not be particularised) we learn that his exterior was shaggy and hairy, one of the characters there mistaking him for 'a dancing bear'. His 'bottle-nose' and 'evil face' are mentioned both in that piece and in T. Lupton's *All for Money*, 1578; and that he had a tail, if it required proof, is evident from the circumstance that the Vice asks him for a piece of it to make a fly-flap. His ordinary exclamation on entering was, 'Ho, ho, ho!' and on all occasions he was prone to roaring and crying out, especially when, for the amusement of the spectators, he was provoked to it by castigation at the hands of the Vice. Malone states that 'his constant attendant was the Vice', as if the Devil never appeared without him, but in *The Disobedient Child* (n. d. but printed about 1560), and in one or two other Morals, he exhibited alone.¹

¹ The following amusing story, founded upon the dress and appearance of the Devil in ancient theatrical performances, is from *A C mery Talys*, n. d. but printed by John Rastell prior to 1533: the hero had played the Devil in some drama of that period.

'Of John Adroyns in the dyvyl's apparell. iij.

'It fortunyd that in a market towne in the counte of Suffolke there was a stage-play, in the which play one callyd John adroyns, which dwellyd in a nother vyllage ij myle from thens, playde the dyvyl. And when the play was done thys John adroyns in the evynyng departed fro the sayde market towne to go home to hys owne house: because he had there no change of clothyng he went forth in hys dyvyll's apparell, whych in the way comyng homeward cam thorow a warden of conys, belongyng to a gentylman of the vyllage wher he him self dwelt. At whych tyme it fortunyd a preste, a vycar of a church therby, with ij or iij other unthryfty felows, had brought with them a hors, a hey and a feret, to thentent there to get conys, and when the feret was in the yerth, and the hey set over the path way where thys John adroyns shuld come, thys prest and hys felows saw hym come in the devyl's rayment: consideryng that they were in the dyvyl's servyce, and stelyng of conys, and sup-

Regarding the Vice, the late Mr. Douce was of opinion (with that sagacity and knowledge which distinguished him, and

posyng it had ben the devyll in dede for fere they ran away. Thys John adroyns in the dyvyl's rayment, and because it was somewhat dark, saw not the hay, but went forth in hast and stomblid thereat, and fell down, that with the fal he had almost broken his nek. But whan he was a lytyll revyvyd, he lokyd up and spyed it was a hay to catch conys, and lokyd further and saw that they ran away for fere of him, and saw a horse tyed to a bush laden with conys whych they had taken, and he toke the horse and the haye and lept upon the horse and rode to the gentylmanny's place that was lorde of the waren, to the entente to have thank for takynge suche a pray. And whan he came knokyd at the gatys. To whome anone one of the gentylmanny's servaunts askyd who was there, and sodeinly openyd the gate, and as sone as he percevyd hym in the devyl's rayment, was sodenly abashyd, and sparryd the dore agayn, and went in to hys mayster and sayd and sware to hys mayster that the dyvell was at the gate and wolde come in. The gentylman heryng hym say so callyd another of his servauntys, and bad hym go to the gate to knowe who was there. Thys seconde servaunt came to the gate, durst not open it, but askyd wyth lowd voyce who was there? thys John Adroyns in the dyvyls aparell answeyrd with a hye voyce and sayd, Tell thy mayster I must nedys speke with hym or I go. Thys second servaunt heryng.

[*Eight lines of the original are here wanting in the only known copy.*] the devyll in dede that is at the gate syttinge upon an horse laden with soules, and be lykelyhode he is come for your soule, purpos ye to let him have your soule, and if he had your soule I wene he shulde be gon: the gentylman than mervaylously abasshed called his chaplayne and sayd let a candell be light and gette holy water, and wente to the gate with as manye servantes as durste go with him, where the chaplayne with mucche conjuration sayd, In the name of the father, sonne, and holy ghost I commande, and charge the in the holy name of God to tell me wherefore thou comeste hyther? This John Adroynes in the devill's apparell seying them be gynne to conjure after such maner sayd: Nay feare not me for I am a good devyll, I am John Adroynes your neighbour in this towne, and he that playde the devyll to day in the playe. I bryng my mayster a dosen or two of his owne conyes that were stolen in dede and theyr horse and theyr haye, and made them for feare to ronne awaye: whanne

make difference dangerous), that the name was derived from the nature of the character;¹ and certain it is that he is represented most wicked by design, and never good but by accident. As the Devil now and then appeared without the Vice, so the Vice sometimes appeared without the Devil. Malone tells that 'the principal employment of the Vice was to belabour the Devil'; but although he was frequently so engaged, he had also other and higher duties. He figured now and then in the religious plays of a later date, and as has been shewn in *The Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalen*, 1567, he performed the part of her lover, under the name of Infidelity, before her conversion: in *King Darius*, 1565, he also acted a prominent part, by his own evil impulses, under the name of Iniquity, without any prompting from the representative of the principle of evil. Such was the general style of the Vice; and as Iniquity he is spoken of by Shakespeare² and Ben Jonson.³ The Vice and Iniquity seem, however, sometimes to have been distinct persons,⁴ and he was not unfrequently called by the name of particular vices: thus, in *Lusty Juventus*, the Vice performs the part of Hypocrisy; in *Common Conditions*, he is called Conditions; in *Like will to Like*, he is

they harde hym thus speke, by his voyce knewe hym well, and opened the gate and lette hym come in. And so all the forsayd feare was turned to myrthe and disporte. By this tale ye may se that men feare many tymes more than they nede, whiche hathe caused men to beleve that sperytes and devyls have ben sene in dyvers places, whan it hathe ben nothyng so.'

¹ *Illustrations of Shakespeare*, i, 468, where the merely fanciful etymologies of Hanmer, Warton, and Steevens are considered.

² *Richard III*, act iii, sc. i.

³ *Staple of News*, second Intermean.

⁴ In the play of *Histriomastix*, 1610, we read the following stage-direction establishing this point:—'Enter a roaring Devil with *the Vice* on his back, *Iniquity* in one hand, and *Juventus* in the other.'

named Nichol New-fangle ; in *the Trial of Treasure*, his part is that of Inclination ; in *All for Money*, he is called Sin ; in *Tom Tyler and his Wife*, Desire ; and in *Appius and Virginia*, Haphazard.

Gifford designates the Vice 'the buffoon of the old Mysteries and Moralities',¹ as if he had figured in the Miracle-plays represented at Chester, Coventry, York, and elsewhere : Malone also, in a passage before alluded to, speaks of him as the 'constant attendant' of the Devil in 'the ancient religious plays'. Theobald, in a note on the words 'the formal Vice Iniquity' in *Richard the Third*, asserts that before the period of the Reformation there was hardly an old play without a Devil and a Vice. The fact is that the Vice was wholly unknown in our 'religious plays' which have hitherto gone by the name of 'Mysteries', and to which Gifford, Malone, and Theobald refer. *The Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalen* and *King Darius*, already mentioned as containing the character of the Vice, were not written until after the reign of Mary. The same remark will apply to the *Interlude of Queen Hester*, 1561, which differs from other religious plays, inasmuch as the Vice there is a court jester and servant, and is named Hardy-dardy.²

¹ *Ben Jonson's Works*, vol. v, p. 9.

² Nash, in his *Strange Newes of the intercepting certaine Letters*, 1592, laughing at the versification of Gabriel Harvey, says, that it reminds him of the style of the Vice, and he subjoins a specimen, possibly taken from some old Moral :—'I will not (he says) rob you of your due commendation in anything. In this sonnet [*i. e.*, upon R. Greene] you have counterfeited the stile of the old Vice in the Morals (Nash does not say *Mysteries*), as right up and as down may be.

'*Letter*.—Greene the Coneycatcher of this dreame the author,
For his dainty device deserveth the halter.

Vice.—Hey nan, a non Sir—soft, let me make water ;
Whip it to go, I'll kiss my maisters daughter.
Tum tiddey dum da, falangtedo diddle,
Sol la me fa sol, conatus in fiddle.'

With regard to 'Moralities', it is certainly true, that in the most ancient Moral-plays characters of gross buffoonery and vicious propensities were inserted for the amusement and instruction of the audience : but, although we hear of 'the fool' in Medwall's interlude, performed before Henry VIII in 1516, such a character seems very rarely to have been specifically called 'the Vice' anterior to the Reformation.

On the external appearance of the Vice, Douce has observed, that 'being generally dressed in a fool's habit', he was gradually and undistinguishably blended with the domestic fool ;¹ and there is every probability that such was the result. Ben Jonson, in his *Devil is an Ass*, alludes to this very circumstance, when he is speaking of the fools of old kept in the houses of the nobility and gentry :—

' Fifty years ago and six,
When every great man had his Vice stand by him
In his long coat, shaking his wooden dagger.'²

The Vice here spoken of was the domestic fool of the nobility about the year 1560 ; to whom also Puttenham, in his *Arte of English Poesie*, alludes, under the terms 'buffoon or vice in plays'.³ In the second Intermean of his *Staple of News*, Ben Jonson tells us that the Vice sometimes wore 'a juggler's jerkin with false skirts' ; and though Douce is unquestionably correct when he states, that the Vice was 'generally dressed in a fool's habit', he did not by any means constantly wear the parti-coloured habiliments of an idiot : he was sometimes required to act a gallant, and now and then to assume the disguise of virtues it suited his purpose to personate. In *The Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalen*, he several times changes his apparel for the sake of deception. In *The Trial*

¹ *Illustrations of Shakespeare*, ii, 305.

² *Devil is an Ass*, act i, scene 1.

³ 4to, 1589, p. 69.

of *Treasure*, 1567, he was not only provided, as was customary, with his wooden dagger, but in order to render him more ridiculous, with a pair of spectacles (no doubt of a preposterous size), which he is desired by one of the characters to put on. The 'long coat' worn by the Vice, according to the preceding quotation from Ben Jonson's *Devil is an Ass*, was doubtless that dress which, Mr. Douce informs us, belonged 'to the idiot or natural fool',¹ often of a mischievous and malignant disposition; and it affords another link of connection between the Vice and the domestic fool. The same observation may perhaps be made upon the 'false skirts' spoken of by Ben Jonson in his *Staple of News*; and the 'juggler's jerkin' might be the sort of dress worn by the Vice in the interlude of *Jack Fuggler*. The 'flapper' mentioned by Mr. Douce,² as part of the caparisons of the fool, was, perhaps, that instrument which the Vice in *All-for Money*, 1578, wished to form out of the end of the Devil's tail.³ The Vice, like the fool, was often furnished with a dagger of lath, and it was not unusual that it should be gilt.

Just preceding the mention of the 'juggler's jerkin' by Ben Jonson, as part of the dress of the Vice, is an allusion to the ludicrous mode in which poetical justice was not unfrequently done to him at the conclusion of a Moral. Tattle observes, 'but there is never a fiend to carry him away'; and in the first Intermean of the same play, Mirth leads us to suppose, that it was a very common termination of the adventures of the Vice, for him to be carried off to hell on the back of the devil:

¹ *Illustrations of Shakespeare*, ii, 321.

² *Ibid.*, ii, 319.

³ In this performance, if not in others, he spoke in two voices, for when All-for-Money requires him to make proclamation, the Vice asks,

'Shall I in my mannes voyce, or in my boyes voyce it declare?'
and All-for-Money replies,

'So that it be heard I do not greatly care.'

'he would carry away the Vice on his back, quick to hell, in every play where he came'. In *The Longer thou livest the more Fool thou art*, and in *Like will to Like*, the Vice is disposed of nearly in this summary manner: in the first, Confusion carries him to the devil, and in the last, Lucifer bears him off to the infernal regions on his shoulders. In *King Darius*, the Vice runs to hell of his own accord, to escape from Constancy, Equity, and Charity. According to Bishop Harsnet (in a passage cited by Malone),¹ the Vice was in the habit of riding and beating the devil at other times than when he was thus hurried against his will to punishment.

It is not necessary to enter at all at large into the manner in which Moral-plays were represented. The temporary scaffolds, pageants, or stages required for Miracle-plays, were used in the dramatic performances which to a certain extent superseded them; and a rude drawing at the end of one of the Macro MS. Morals, written early in the reign of Henry VI, exhibits five scaffolds, and a castle in the centre, with a bed under one, as necessary for the performance of the piece.² In another Moral, of the same collection, it is obvious that an open space or 'a yard', as it is called in the manuscript, was required for the due exhibition. In general, however, only one scaffold or stage seems to have been employed, and this was erected, either in the street, or upon a green adjoining a town or village, sometimes in the public halls of boroughs and cities, and sometimes in the dwellings of the nobility, or their wealthy, but untitled imitators.

It will be remarked, that not a few of the Morals or Moral-plays analysed in the following pages, are called 'Interludes',

¹ *Shakespeare by Boswell*, iii, 27. It is a quotation from Harsnet's *Declaration of Popish Impostures*, 1603.

² A fac-simile of this primitive sketch is given in Sharp's *Dissertation on the Coventry Miracle-plays*.

a term apparently derived from the fact, that they were played in the intervals of banquets and entertainments. The word was in common use in the reign of Edward IV; but it seems more properly to belong to such pieces as were written by John Heywood in the reign of Henry VIII, and which were designed by the author for performance at Court, on occasions of annual or accidental festivity: they almost form a distinct species of dramatic representation, without connexion with allegorical abstractions, of which Heywood may be looked upon as the inventor. Morals were, however, applied to this purpose both before and afterwards, and the MS. historical play of *Sir Thomas More*,¹ written towards the close of the reign of Elizabeth, shews exactly the time, form, and manner of such representations. Sir Thomas More there gives a splendid supper to the Lord Mayor of London, the Aldermen, their wives, etc., and four men-players and a boy (who doubtless took female characters) having heard of the intended banquet, proffer their services in order to vary the amusements. Sir Thomas More declares, that it will be 'excellent to have a play before the banquet', and asks the actors what pieces they can perform? The answer is, 'Divers, my Lord: *The Cradle of Securitie*, *Hit nayle o'th Head*, *Impatient Poverty*, the play of *The Four Pees*, *Dives and Lazarus*², *Lustie Juventus*, and *The Marriage of Wit and Wisedome*.' Sir Thomas More prefers the last, and the

¹ *Harleian MSS.*, No. 7368.

² *Dives and Lazarus*, and several other Morals and dramatic productions of a different class, are enumerated in a curious passage in Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*, 1592, where a player is made to tell Roberto—'Why, I am as famous for *Delphrygus* and *The King of the Fairies*, as ever was any of my time: *The Twelve Labours of Hercules* have I terribly thundered on the stage, and played three scenes of the Devil in *The Highway to Heaven*.' 'Have ye so?' said Roberto, 'then I pray you pardon me.' 'Nay, more (quoth the player), I can serve to make a pretty

representation of it accordingly commences, as a play within a play, and it is continued until an accidental interruption occurs. From the reign of Henry VII to that of James I it was very customary for players to perform during private festivities, but especially at the showy marriages of the nobility and gentry.

Many dramatic pieces of the description of which we are now speaking were not printed until long after they were written and acted; and the date when they issued from the press is often no criterion of the time when they came from the pen. Some that are known to have been published are now lost; others yet remain in MS.; and a few that appear to have been popular were, perhaps, never printed, and have not survived: in the first class may be mentioned Skelton's *Nigramansir*,¹ in the second the *Macro Morals*, to which we have before alluded, and in the third, several of those in the preceding quotation from the play of *Sir Thomas More*. The extreme popularity of *The Cradle of Security* cannot be doubted: it is mentioned in Chettle's comedy of *Patient Grissel*, 1603, in the *Works* of Taylor the water-poet, 1630,² and in Willis's *Mount Tabor*, 1639; which Malone quotes to show the nature of such performances, and which is nearly

speech, for I was a country author, passing at a Moral; for it was I that penned the Moral of *Man's Wit*, the *Dialogue of Dives*, and for seven years space was absolute interpreter of the puppets.' Greene meant himself by Roberto, and the player was some individual then known as the author of the two last pieces he mentions: he is just afterwards made to lament that *Morals*, in 1592, were out of fashion:—'But now my almanack is out of date;

'The people make no estimation
Of *Morals*, teaching education.'

¹ See Warton, *H. E. P.*, iii, 185, edit. 8vo.

² P. 122, fol., in a Poem called *The Thiefe*.

all the information he supplies upon the subject.¹ Of a more curious Moral-play, written in defence of theatrical exhibitions, and acted about the year 1580, the following account is

¹ *Shakespeare by Boswell*, iii, 28. Malone is inaccurate in the extract he furnishes, but which he professes to give *literatim*: he also omits a curious portion of the original. The late Mr. Phelps had a copy of this remarkable little volume, from which we quote the whole that relates to our subject: it is headed,

‘UPON A STAGE-PLAY WHICH I SAW WHEN I WAS A CHILD.

‘In the city of Gloucester the manner is (as I think it is in other like corporations) that when Players of Enterludes come to towne, they first attend the Mayor, to enforme him what noble-man’s servants they are, and so to get licence for their publike playing: and if the Mayor like the Actors, or would show respect to their Lord and Master, he appoints them to play their first play before himselfe and the Aldermen and Common Counsell of the City; and that is called the Mayor’s play, where every one that will comes in without money, the Mayor giving the players a reward as hee thinks fit, to show respect unto them. At such a play, my father tooke me with him, and made mee stand betweene his leggs, as he sate upon one of the benches, where we saw and heard very well. The play was called (*the Cradle of Security*) wherein was personated a King, or some great Prince, with his Courtiers of severall kinds, amongst which three Ladies were in speciall grace with him, and they keeping him in delights and pleasures, drew him from his graver Counsellors, hearing of Sermons, and listening to good counsell, and admonitions, that in the end they got him to lye downe in a cradle upon the stage, where these three Ladies joyning in a sweet song, rocked him asleepe, that he snorted againe, and in the meane time closely conveyed under the cloaths where withall he was covered, a vizard like a swine’s snout upon his face, with three wire chaines fastned thereunto, the other end whereof being holden severally by those three Ladies, who fall to singing againe, and then discovered his face, that the spectators might see how they had transformed him, going on with their singing: whilst all this was acting, there came forth of another doore, at the farthest end of the stage, two old men, the one in blew, with a Serjeant at Armes his mace on his shoulder, the other in red with a drawn sword in his hand, and leaning with the other hand upon the other’s

left by Stephen Gosson in his rare tract, *Playes confuted in five Actions*, which appeared, without date, in the year 1581 or 1582: the title of it was *The Play of Plays*: he says,

‘The author of *The Playe of Playes*, spreading out his battel to hemme me in, is driven to take so large a compasse, that his array is the thinner, and therefore the easier to be broken. He tyeth Life and Delight so fast together, that if Delight be restrained, Life presently perisheth: there Zeale perceyving Delight to be embraced of Life, puttes a snaffle in his mouth to keepe him under: Delight being bridled, Zeale leadeth Life through a wilderness of lothsomenesse,

shoulder, and so they two went along in a soft pace, round about by the skirt of the stage, till at last they came to the Cradle, when all the Court was in greatest jollity, and then the foremost old man with his mace stroke a fearfull blow upon the Cradle, whereat all the Courtiers, with the three Ladies and the vizard, all vanished; and the desolate Prince starting up bare faced, and finding himselfe thus sent for to judgment, made a lamentable complaint of his miserable case, and so was carried away by wicked spirits. This Prince did personate in the morall, the wicked of the world; the three Ladies, Pride, Covetousnesse, and Luxury; the two old men, the end of the world, and the last judgement. This sight tooke such impression in me, that when I came towards mans estate, it was as fresh in my memory as if I had seen it newly acted. From whence I observe out of mine owne experience, what great care should bee had in the education of children, to keepe them from seeing of spectacles of ill examples, and hearing of lascivious or scurrilous words; for that their young memories are like faire writing tables, wherein if the faire sentences or lessons of grace bee written, they may (by God’s blessing) keep them from many vicious blots of life, wherewithal they may otherwise be tainted: especially considering the general corruption of our nature whose very memories are apter to receive evill than good, and that the well seasoning of the Caske at the first, keepes it the better and sweeter ever after: and withall wee may observe, how farre unlike the plaies and harmlesse morals of former times are to those which have succeeded, many of which (by report of others) may bee termed schoolmasters of vice, and provocations to corruptions; which our depraved nature is too prone unto; nature and grace being contraries.’

where Glutte scarreth them all, chasing both Zeale and Delight from Life, and with the clubbe of amasednesse strikes such a pegge into the heade of Life, that he falles downe for dead upon the stage.

‘Life being thus fainte and overtravailed, destitute of his guyde, robbed of Delight, is readie to give up the ghost in the same place : then entereth Recreation, which with musicke and singing rockes Life asleepe to recover his strength.

‘By this meanes Tediousnesse is driven from Life, and the teinte is drawne out of his heade, which the clubbe of amasednes left behinde.

‘At last Recreation setteth up the gentleman upon his feete, Delight is restored to him againe, and such kinde of sportes, for cullices, are brought in to nourishe him, as none but Delight must applye to his stomache. Then time being made for the benefite of Life, and Life being allowed to follow his appetite amongst all manner of pastimes, Life chooseth Commedies for his delight, partly because Commedies are neither chargable to the beholders purse, nor painful to his body ; partly because he may sit out of the raine to viewe the same, when many other pastimes are hindred by wether. Zeale is no more admitted to Life before he be somewhat pinchte in the wast, to avoyde extremitie, and being not in the end simply called Zeale, but Moderate Zeale : a few conditions are prescribed to Comedies ; that the matter be purged, deformities blazed, sinne rebuked, honest mirth intermingled, and fit time for the hearing of the same appointed. Moderate Zeale is contented to suffer them, who joyneth with Delight to direct Life againe, after which he triumphes over Death, and is crowned with eternitie.’

This quotation clearly shows the whole course and conduct of the Moral called *The Play of Plays*. Malone for many years believed that a tract by Thomas Lodge, in defence of theatrical amusements,¹ was entitled *The Play of Plays*, and

¹ Only a single copy of it is known, and that is without the title-page, and in 16mo. It was formerly in the possession of Mr. Harris of Covent Garden Theatre, in whose hands Malone saw it long after he had finished his *History of the Stage*, so that he could not make

he was not at all aware that it was a dramatic performance, publicly acted at the Theatre in Shoreditch, about the year 1580. It is evident, from what Gosson says, that it was written to counteract his *School of Abuse*, which was published in 1579.

In the succeeding examination of some of the most important and characteristic Morals, Moralities, or Moral-plays in our language, we have adverted,

1. To some highly valuable manuscript specimens formerly in the collection of Dr. Cox Macro, and afterwards in that of Mr. Hudson Gurney, which are much more ancient than any other pieces of the same description yet discovered.
2. To printed Morals, the lesson enforced by which relates to the vices and regeneration of mankind at large.
3. To such as convey instructions for human conduct of a more varied character.
4. To pieces belonging to the class of Morals, but making approaches to the representation of real life and manners.
5. To Interludes chiefly without allegory, and particularly to those of John Heywood.

use of it. Lodge himself tells us, in his *Alarum for Usurers*, 1584, that his *Defence of Plays* had been forbidden by the public authorities: it consists of three Divisions: 1. The Defence of Poetry; 2. The Defence of Music; 3. The Defence of Plays; and in the last it speaks of Gosson, not merely as a play-maker but as a play-actor. Lodge asserts that Gosson's play of *Cataline's Conspiracy* was not all his own, and from what follows it should seem that Robert Wilson, who was appointed one of the Queen's Players in 1583, had written a short piece, possibly upon the same subject:—'Beleve me, I should preferr Wilson's shorte and sweete, if I were a judge, a piece surely worthy of prayse, the practise of a good scholler: would the wiser would overlooke that, they might perhaps cull some wisdome out of a player's toye.' Lodge agrees that plays ought to be forbidden on the Sabbath, and ends thus:—'Lastly, I frendly bid Gosson farewell, wysHING him to temper his penn with more discretion.' This Answer to Gosson's *School of Abuse* was reprinted by the Shakespeare Society in 1853.

MANUSCRIPT MORAL PLAYS

OF THE REIGN OF HENRY VI.

THE CASTLE OF PERSEVERANCE—MIND, WILL AND
UNDERSTANDING—MANKIND.

The Castle of Perseverance is one of the oldest Morals, Moralities, or Moral-plays in our language, and in some of the accompanying circumstances it resembles a Miracle-play.

From speeches made by two Vexillators, it appears that this sort of proclamation of the intended commencement of the performance was made a week before it actually began; so that the people of the whole neighbourhood had full notice, not only that a play would be acted upon some open space, or 'green', but of the nature of the piece itself. The following lines are delivered by one of the Vexillators, trumpets having been first blown to attract attention.

'Grace if god will graunte us of his mykyl myth,
These percell in propyrtes¹ we spose us to playe,
This day sevenenyt before you in syth,
At N on the grene in ryal aray.
Ye, haste you thane thedyrward, syrs, hendly and hyth,
All good neybors ful specyally we you pray,
And loke that ye be there be tyme, luffely and lyth,²
For we schul be onward be underne of the day.'

¹ Malone, following Warton (*Shakespeare by Boswell*, iii, 25), has remarked upon the use of the word *properties* in the reign of Henry VIII (1511), but we here find it employed, and in the same sense of furniture apparel, etc., much earlier.

² Lovely and light.

Thus it was evident that the performers went from place to place; N, as in the instance of the *Ludus Coventriæ* and elsewhere, being put in the proclamation for the *nomen* of the town, in or near which the exhibition was to be made.¹ The performance was to conclude by 'undern of the day', that is to say, at nine in the morning; so that, perhaps, like the *Ludus Coventriæ*, it commenced at six o'clock. It is not necessary to quote any part of the explanation given by the Vexillators of the general construction and moral of the play, as that will be sufficiently detailed as we proceed in our examination of it.

The play opens with speeches from *Mundus*, Belial and *Caro*, enlarging on their several powers and properties, after which *Humanum Genus*, the representative of the whole race of man, enters as just born and naked:

'I was born this nyth in bloody ble,²
And nakyd I am, as ye may se.'

While speaking, a Good and a Bad Angel take their places on his right and left, and dispute their claim to the care of him, *Humanum Genus* being in turn invited to follow each: he decides in favour of the Bad Angel, and the 'mynstrells pipe up', to celebrate the success of the infernal messenger. The Bad Angel carries his pupil to *Mundus*, who is talking with his two friends, *Stultitia* and *Voluptas*. When *Voluptas* sees *Humanum Genus* he exclaims:—

'Be Satan, thou art a nobyl knave
To techyn men fyrst fro goode:
Lust and lykynge he schal have,
Lechery schal ben his fode.

¹ This mark, a sort of ornamented N, is three times repeated in the course of the addresses of the Vexillators, which occupy about 130 lines: in every instance the Vexillator substituted the name of the town or place, whatever it might be, in which he was speaking.

² Colour.

Mets and drynks he schal have trye ;
 With a lykyng lady of lofte
 He schal sytyn in sendal¹ softe,
 To cachen hym to hell crofte²
 That day that he schal deye.'

Voluptas and *Stultitia* receive orders from *Mundus* to attend upon *Humanum Genus*. *Detractio*, who says that his name is Backbiter (and whom we have already seen introduced into the fourteenth Coventry play) is also directed to be one of his followers : *Detractio* tells *Humanum Genus*,

'Bakbytynge and detraction
 Schal goo with the fro town to town :
 I am thyne owyn page ;'

and he brings him acquainted with *Avaritia*, who carries him to the six other Deadly Sins, saying—

'Here I feffe the in myn hevene,
 With gold, and sylver, lyth as leveve,
 The dedly synnys all sevene.
 Pryde, Wrathe, and Envye,
 Come forthe the develys chyl dren thre !
 Letchery, Slawth and Glotonye,
 To mans flesch ye are f[r]ends fre.'

In order to conjure them up to where he is standing he pronounces a sort of incantation :

'Dryvyth downe over dalys³ drye,
 Beth now blythe as any be ;
 Over hyll and holtys⁴ ye gon hyge,⁵
 To come to Mankynde and to me.'

¹ Silk.

² Croft, *i. e.*, an inclosure, seems to have been a common term for hell. In the Towneley Miracle-play of the *Judicium*, Tutivillus says,

'Come to my crofte
 All harlottys,' etc.

³ Dales.

⁴ Woods.

⁵ High.

Here we meet with rather a severe hit at the clergy, for *Humanum Genus*, welcoming *Invidia*, observes, that 'in abbeys he dwellyth full ofte'; whence we might, perhaps, infer that the writer was not an ecclesiastic. *Luxuria*, a female, soon afterwards becomes the bed-fellow of *Humanum Genus*. The Bad and Good angels in turn triumph and deplore, and the latter takes *Confessio* to *Humanum Genus*, who tells *Confessio* that he is 'come too soon', that it is not yet Good Friday, and that he has something else to do than to confess his sins. With the assistance of *Pœnitentia*, however, *Confessio* at last succeeds in reclaiming *Humanum Genus*, who asks where he may take up his abode in security? the reply is, that he must dwell in the *Castle of Perseverance*, 'for it is strenger thanne any in Fraunce', and thither they conduct him. By this time, we are informed by the Bad Angel, that *Humanum Genus* is 'forty wynter olde'. The seven cardinal virtues are his companions in the castle, which is soon besieged by the seven deadly sins, headed by Belial, after he has abused and beaten them for their negligence in allowing *Humanum Genus* to escape them :—

'With tene¹ I schal you tey :²
Harlots, at onys,³
Fro this wonys,⁴
Be Belyals bonys,
Ye schal a beye.'⁵

Et verberabit eos super terram, is the stage direction at this point : *Mundus*, on his part, belabours *Avaritia*. There is at least spirit in the subsequent address of Belial to his followers, before they assault the Castle of Perseverance :

'I here trumpys trebelen all of tene :
The wery world walkyth to werre⁶ . . .

¹ Sorrow.

² Tie.

³ Once.

⁴ Dwelling.

⁵ Abide, suffer.

⁶ War.

Sprede my penon up on a prene,
 And stryke we forthe now undyr sterre.
 Schapyth now your sheldys shene
 Yone skallyd¹ skouts for to skerre . . .
 Buske² ye now, boys, belyve,
 For ever I stonde in mekyl stryve
 Whyl Mankynd is in clene lyve.'

Some of the besiegers of the castle were on horseback, for *Caro* says of himself,

'Wahanne I syt in my sadyl it is a selkowth syt ;³
 I gape as a Gogmagog whanne I gynne to gase.'

Humanum Genus, in a state of considerable alarm, calls on 'the Duke that died on rood' to take care of his soul. The deadly sins are defeated, and it appears from their complaint, that they suffered most from roses flung at them from the walls by Charity, Patience, etc., which struck them hard enough to make them 'blak and blo'.

The assailants, therefore, retire discomfited ; and very soon afterwards it appears, that *Humanum Genus*, by supposed lapse of time, has grown 'hory and colde', and that his 'bake gynneth to bowe and bende' ; at which time *Avaritia* secretly makes his way under the castle walls, and uses artful persuasions to induce *Humanum Genus* to quit it : he consents at last, and promises to do as *Avaritia* bids him, remarking,

'Certys this ye wel knowe,
 It is good, whan so the wynde blowe,
 A man to have sum what of his owe,⁴
 What happe so ever be tyde.'

Tunc descendit ad Avaritiam, leaving the castle, to the dismay of the Virtues, while *Largitas* thus addresses the spectators :—

¹ Scald. ² Make ready. ³ A seldom known sight. ⁴ Own.

‘ Now, good men alle, that here be
Have my systerys excusyd and me,
Thou¹ Mankynde fro this castel fle.’

Garçio (a boy), representing the rising generation, demands of old *Humanum Genus*, all he has accumulated with the assistance of *Avaritia*, alleging that *Mundus* had given it to him ; after which *Mors* (who calls himself ‘ drery Death’) and *Anima* make their appearance, *Mors* delivering a long speech on the greatness and universality of his power, and on the forgetfulness of man. *Anima* calls on *Misericordia* for aid ; but the Bad Angel, taking *Humanum Genus* on his back, sets off for the infernal regions, ending a speech with

‘ Have good day ; I goo to helle.’

A discussion then takes place in Heaven, *Misericordia*, *Pax*, *Iustitia*, and *Veritas*, four females, applying to *Deus*, *sedens in tronum*, who says :—

‘ Welcum in fere,
Brythere thanne blossom on brere,
My dowters dere ;
Cum forth and stande ye me nere.’

Misericordia and *Pax* plead in behalf of *Humanum Genus*, and *Veritas* and *Iustitia* against him. The Deity sends for the soul of *Humanum Genus* : *Pax* takes it from the Bad Angel, and *Misericordia* thus introduces it :—

‘ Lo, here Mankynd,
Lyter thanne lef is on lynde,²
That hath ben pynynd :
Thy mercy, lord, lete hym fynde.’

¹ Though ?

² This figure seems to have been almost proverbial. In the *Widkirk* play of *The Shepherds*, one of them says,

‘ As lyght I me feyll,
As leyfe on a tree ;’

We are rather left to infer that *Humanum Genus* is saved, than directly told it. *Pater sedens in judicio* pronounces the sentence, and, in the course of what he says, thus enlarges upon his own power :—

‘Kyng, kayser, knyht, and kampyone,
Pope, patriark, prest, and prelat in pes,
Duke, dowtyest in dede be dale and be downe,
Lytyl and mekyl, the more and the les,
All the stats of the werld is at myne renowne.’

The Bad Angel is of course left in hell ; but what becomes of the rest of the persons, and especially of the Seven Deadly Sins, we receive no information. It may be remarked as a singularity, that the Deity in person is made to speak the following epilogue, after having concluded an address which relates chiefly to the business of the piece.

‘All men example here at may take,
To mayntein the good and mendyn here mys.
Thus endyth our gamys :
To save you fro synnyng,
Evyr at the begynnyng,
Thynke on youre laste endyng.
Te deum laudamus.’

This, in fact, is the moral of the play, which, it will be remarked, is a well-constructed and much-varied allegory : although it is certainly as old as the reign of Henry VI, the production is of such a nature as to indicate that it must have had predecessors in the same kind, before it could have arrived at such a degree of completeness. At the close of the per-

and Chaucer in his Envoy to husbands, at the end of his *Clerk of Oxenford's Tale*, names the same tree as is mentioned in this Moral :

‘Be aye of chere as light as lefe on *linde*.’

The *linde* is what we now call the *Linden* or *Lime* tree.

formance is a list of the characters, no fewer than thirty-six in number (including the two Vexillators); so that the getting of it up must have been expensive, and according to a rude drawing on the last leaf, its representation required the appearance of a castle in the centre, with a bed under it for *Humanum Genus*, and five separate scaffolds for *Deus*, *Belial*, *Mundus*, *Caro*, and *Avaritia*.

The next Moral, *Mind*, *Will*, and *Understanding*,¹ must also have been represented at very considerable cost, for, independent of the rich dresses of the speaking characters, eighteen mutes are introduced, all differently disguised, for the purpose of producing bustle and variety: still the construction of the piece is not by any means complicated.

It is opened by Wisdom, who states that he represents the second person of the Trinity: he is dressed in 'a rich purple cloth of gold', with 'a beard of gold', a 'cheveler' or perriwig on his head, and 'a rich imperial crown thereupon, set with precious stones—in his left hand a ball of gold with a cross thereupon, and in his right hand a regal sceptre'. He is soon joined by *Anima* 'as a maid, in a white cloth of gold, gaily purfled with minever, a mantle of black thereupon; a cheveler like to Wisdom, with a rich chaplet laced behind, hanging down, with two knots of gold and side tassels'. By the dialogue between them, it appears that they are in love with each other: *Anima* says—

'A, soveren joy! my herts affyance
The fervoure of my love to you I present,
That mekyt my herte youre love so fervent,
Teache me the scolys of your dyvynyte', etc.

¹ This is the Moral, a large fragment of which exists among the *Digby MSS.* (No. 133), in the Bodleian Library: it is there imperfect at the conclusion. It is apparently in the same hand-writing as the complete copy we have used.

Their conversation upon heavenly love, the seven sacraments, the five senses, sensuality, and reason, is very long and dull. Mind, Will, and Understanding, then describe in detail their various properties; and after Five Wits, attired as five virgins, have gone out singing, some relief to the tedium is afforded by the entrance of Lucifer, 'in a devil's array without, and within as a proud gallant'; the meaning of which is, that he has his gallant's dress under his 'devil's array', for he soon removes the latter. He begins as usual, 'Out harrow!' etc., and relates the creation and the fall of man, speaking of Mind, Will, and Understanding, as the three properties of the soul of man, which he resolves to assail and corrupt. He accordingly 'devoideth, and cometh in again as a goodly gallant', and succeeds in alluring Mind, Will, and Understanding to vice. Will declares—

'Ya, I woll no more row a geyn the floode;
I woll sett my soule on a mery pynne:'

and the other two agree with him, Understanding adding,

'We woll be fresche, hamp,¹ *la plu joly*:
Farwell penance.'

While they have temporarily withdrawn, Lucifer rejoices, and, coming forward, observes:—

'Resone I have made both dethe and dumme;
Grace is out, and put a roine.²

We then come to an incident which seems merely meant to excite laughter. Lucifer, at the end of his speech, says:—

¹ It is not easy to guess what word these letters are intended for; possibly, only an interjection.

² This word may serve to add another to the many notes on '*Aroint thee witch*', in *Macbeth*, act i, scene 3. In the MS. 'a' and 'roine' are not joined, as perhaps they ought to be. Nobody pretends to have discovered the etymology of 'aroint'; and, as a mere conjecture, the French verb *éloigner* (corrupted to *eroigner*) may be mentioned.

‘Verely the soule god ys with in,
 And wen yt ys in dedly synne,
 Yt [is] verely the develys place :
 Thus, by colours gyane¹
 Many a soule to hell I wyne.
 Wyde to go I may not blyne²
 With this fals boy, god gyff hym evell grace.
 [*Her he takyt a screwde boy with hym, and goth
 hys wey cryenge.*’

Perhaps he snatched up a boy from the crowd, and ran away with him. Mind, Will, and Understanding, return dressed in gay apparel : they bid farewell to Conscience, and Will especially dedicates himself to lust. They then begin singing :

Mynde.—I rejoyes of this : now let us synge.

Undyrstondyng.—Ande yff I spare, evell joy me wrynge.

Wyll.—Have at you I : lo, I have a sprynge ;
 Lust makyth me wondyr wylde.

Mynde.—A tenour to you both I brynge.

Undyrstondyng.—And I a mene for ony kynge.

Wyll.—And but a trebult I out wrynge,
 The devell hym spede that myrthe exyled !

[*Et content.*’

The words of their song are not given. Will declares that he is ‘as mery as byrd on bow’, and they next determine to have a dance. Mind summons his followers, who are thus described:—‘Here enter six dysgysyde in the sute of Mynde, with rede berdes, and lyons rampant on here crests, and yche a warder in his honde.’ It is directed that the minstrels shall blow their trumpets, and that each of the six shall answer to his name : they appear to be Indignation, Sturdiness, Malice,

¹ Possibly, for ‘gynne’, *i. e.*, *gin* or contrivance.

² Cease.

Hastiness, Wreck, and Discord. Understanding in turn summons his adherents :—

‘The quest of Holborne, cum in your places ;
Ageyn the ryght ever they rechase :
Of wom they holde not, harde his grace ys,
Many a tyme have damnyde truthe.’

This mention of the corruptness of the inquest of Holborn was, perhaps, a temporary allusion, not now to be explained. The direction regarding their entrance is this :—
‘Here entrethe six jurors in a sute, gownde with hoods about her heds, hatts of mayntenance there up on, vyserde diversly.’ Their names are Wrong, Slight, Doubleness, Falseness, Ravin, and Deceit. The servants of Will next arrive—
‘Here entre the six women, three sut dysgysyde as galonts, and three as Matrones, with wondyrfull vysurs correspondent’. They are called Recklesshood, Idleness, Surfeit, Greediness, Spouse-breach, and Fornication. The minstrels play ‘a horne-pype’, and they all dance until they quarrel, when Mynde exclaims in a rage—

‘Hurle hens these harlotts, here gyse ys of France!’

and the eighteen mutes being driven off, Mind, Will, and Understanding remain on the stage. Mind says to his two companions—

‘Leve then thys dalyance,
Ande set we ordenance,
Off better chevesaunce,¹
How we may thryve.

Undyrstondyng.—At Westmynster, with out varyance,
The nex terme shall me sore avaunce,
For retornys, for enbraces, for recordaunce;
Lythlyer to get goode kan no man on lyve.

¹ Enterprise.

Mynde.—And at the parvyse¹ I wyll be .

A'Powlys, be twyn two and three,

With a menye folowyng me. . . .

Wyll.—Ande ever the latter the lever me :

Wen I com lat to the cyte,

I walke all lanys and weys to myne affynyte ;

And I spede not ther, to the stews I resort.'

They continue to converse in this strain for some time, Understanding dwelling, especially, on the tricks of the law. Just as they are about to make their *exit*, in order to eat and drink together, Wisdom unexpectedly enters ; while *Anima*, having been disfigured and corrupted by Mind, Will, and Understanding, 'apperythe in the most horrybull wyse, fowlere than a fend'. She afterwards gives birth to six of the deadly sins, and the operation is thus described :—'Here rennyt out from undyr the horrybull mantyll of the Soule, six small boys in the lyknes of devyllys, and so retorne ageyn.' *Anima* becomes sensible of her dreadful transformation, and Mind, Will, and Understanding find that they are the cause of it. It is added :—'Here they go out, and in the goynge the Soule syngyth in the most lamentabull wyse, with drawte notes, as yt ys songyn in the passyon wyke' ; in allusion probably to the prolonged manner of drawling out the notes of psalms at that season.

Wisdom makes a long speech, in order to give the characters time to dress themselves ; after which, 'here entrethe *Anima*, with the five wyttys goynge before ; Mynde on the onsyde and Undyrstondynge on the other syde, and Wyll folowyng, all in

¹ *Parvyse* means the Portico. This passage settles the doubt (see Glossary to Tyrwhitt's *Chaucer*, *voc.* 'Parvis') as to where the Parvis at London was situated : it was where lawyers met for consultation—viz., the portico of St. Paul's Cathedral. *Pour avis* would seem, therefore, a more reasonable etymology than Du Cange's *Paradisus*.

here fyrst clothynge, her chappeletts and crests, and all havynge on crownys, syngynge in here commynge'. Mind, Will, and Understanding renounce their evil courses, and *Anima* rejoices in the change. The conclusion or epilogue, not assigned to any character, is as follows :—

' Vobis qui timetis Deum

Orietur sol rusticum.

The tru son of ryghtusnes,

Wyche that ys our lorde Jhu,

Shall sprynge in hem that drede hys meknes.

Nowe ye mut evry soule renewe

In grace, and vyces to eschew,

And so to ende with perfection,

That the doctryne of wysdom we may sew.

Sapientia patris graunt that for hys passyon.

Amen.'

At the end is a list of the characters, but it does not include Will, nor any of the persons who have entered to dance.

The moral enforced by the two preceding pieces is the same as that of the third Moral-play, which we shall call *Mankind*. It is, however, mixed up with the grossest obscenity, and seems calculated for an audience of a lower rank: nevertheless, it appears by the introductory speech of Mercy, that persons of the higher orders sat during the performance, while the rest stood. He says—

'O, ye soverens that sytt, and ye brothern that stonde ryght uppe,
Pryke not your felicytes on thyngs transytorye,' etc.

The piece contains a good deal that is curious, and some characters are introduced that have much individuality about them. It seems that Mercy is dressed like a friar; and being joined by three persons called Nought, New-guise, and Now-a-days, they jeer him, and tell him, when he would fain advise them, that his 'body is full of Englysh Laten'. After a good

deal of mere nonsense and absurd buffoonery, they leave Mercy on the stage, and Mankind enters—

‘My name is Mankynde : I have my composycyon
Of a body and of a soull, of condycyon contrarye :
Be twyx the tweyn ys a grett dyvisyon ;
He that shulde be sojecte now he hath the victory.
Thys ys to me a lementable story,
To se my flesch of my soull to have governaunce :
Wher the good wyff ys master, the good man may be sory.’

While Mercy is warning Mankind to eschew vice, Newguise enters with a broken head, which his wife had given him. Nought and Now-a-days also arrive, and Mercy advises Mankind to avoid their company, and to beware of the artifices of the fiend *Tutivillus*, the same demon whose name has already frequently occurred.

‘Beware of Tytivillus, for he lesyth no way,
That goth in vysybull and wyll not be sene :
He wyll ronde¹ in your ere, and cast a net be for your eyn :
He ys worst of them all.’

It afterwards appears that he has the power of making himself invisible ; and that the net spoken of is not figurative but material, for he is so furnished. It is singular, that after Mercy has withdrawn, Mankind sits down on the stage to write—

‘Her[e] wyll I sytt and tytyll in this papyr
The incomparable astat of my permycyon.
Worshypfull Soverence, I have wretyn here
The gloryuse remembrance of my nobyll condycyon.
To have remo[r]s, and memory of mysylff thus wretyn yt ys,
To defende me from all superstycyus charmys.’

Being provided with a spade, Mankind falls to digging for

¹ ‘Round’, *i. e.*, whisper.

his subsistence. Nought, New-guise, and Now-a-days enter, and having sung a song of mere filth, with the burden, 'It is wretyn with a cole', Mankind drives them off, inflicting divers wounds, some of no decorous kind. Mischief, who seems to act a part like that of the Vice, recalls them—

'Alac, alac ! *venez, venez*, cum hether with sorowe !'

and they return and conjure up *Tutivillus* in a very singular manner.

'*Myscheff*.—How, how, a mynstrell ! know ye ony ont ?

Nought.—I kan pype in a Walsyngham wystyll.

Myscheff.—Blow a pase, and you shall bryng hym in with a flewte.

Tytivillus.—I com, with my leggs under me.'

He sends Nought, New-guise, and Now-a-days upon expeditions to commit depredations of all kinds, and when they make their *exit* he gives them his left-handed blessing—

'Goo your wey, a devell wey, go your wey all :

I blysse you *with my lyfte honde* ; foull you befall.'

Mankind, weary with labour, lays down his spade, and *Tutivillus*, invisible, carries it off. Mankind goes out into a place called 'the yerde', but soon returns and falls asleep upon the bare ground. *Tutivillus* causes him to dream that his friend Mercy is hanged, and relates to the audience the substance of the dream, adding—

'But yet I herde, sers, he brake his necke *ab herode* in France,

But I thynke he rydyth on the galous to lern for to dance ;'

the meaning of which seems to be, that he had heard that Mercy had broken his neck, as Herod was represented to do in France in some *Mistère*.¹ Mankind wakes, transformed to all evil dispositions, and New-guise arrives with a broken

¹ No doubt there was a variety in the mode in which the death of Herod was produced. We have already seen, when speaking of the eighteenth

halter about his throat, having narrowly escaped hanging : he says of himself and his companions—

‘We were nere sent Patrykes wey,¹ by hym that me bought ;
I was twychyde by the neke, the game was begunne :
A grace was the halter brast a sonder, *ecce signum*,
The halff is a bowte my neke, we had a nere runne.’

How Nought and Now-a-days escaped we are not told, but Mischief ‘conde his necke verse’ : he enters in fetters, pretending humorously that he is a man in armour, which occasions the rattling ; and he is followed by the rest. Mankind joins them, and a good deal passes on the subject of giving him a new jacket, which operation is intrusted to New-guise. It should seem that this process makes the outside of Mankind correspond with his inside, and he becomes at once an adept in the seven deadly sins.

At this point Mercy again suddenly makes his appearance, and Mischief and the others endeavour to hide Mankind from his sight, who becomes sensible of his lost condition, and in despair calls for a rope to hang himself. Mercy finds him, but Mankind dares not come from his lurking-place. The conclusion is entirely serious, and sufficiently dull : Mankind repents, and is reconciled to Mercy ; while Mischief, Nought, New-guise, and Now-a-days, run off without the infliction of any poetical justice. Mercy at great length warns all to avoid them, and especially to beware of *Titivillus*, who represents the sin of the flesh—

‘And propylly Titivillus sygnyfyth the fende of helle,
The flesch, that ys, the unclene concupyssens of your body...
Beware of Titivillus with his net.’

play of the *Ludus Coventriæ*, that in the French *Mistère* Herod commits suicide. Possibly *ab herode* is miswritten in the text for the French *à l'herode*.

¹ In allusion, perhaps, to St. Patrick's Purgatory.

Mankind then retires—*hic exit Mankind*—and Mercy speaks the epilogue. By two Latin lines at the end, it seems that a monk, who calls himself *Hynghus*, had once been the owner, or possibly was the author, of this most singular, and in some respects, amusing manuscript.

PRINTED MORALS OR MORAL-PLAYS,

RELATING TO MANKIND AT LARGE.

NATURE.—THE WORLD AND THE CHILD.—HICK SCORNER.—
EVERY MAN.—INTERLUDE OF YOUTH.—LUSTY JUVENTUS.

ONE of the most ancient, if not the oldest, of our printed Morals, or Moral-plays, bears the title of *Nature*; and it was written by Henry Medwall, chaplain to Cardinal Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury.¹ No other piece from his pen is extant, but there is no doubt that he wrote others; and one of them, *Of the finding of Truth, carried away by Ignorance and Hypocrisy*, was acted before Henry VIII, in 1516. The title indicates very clearly the character of the production; and we know, besides (see *Annals of the Stage*, i, 69), that it was diversified by the introduction of a Fool, whose part seems to have given greater satisfaction than the rest of the performance. The 'goodly interlude' of *Nature* is in two parts;² and at the conclusion of the first, we find that it was played before

¹ The title, as it appears in the only known copy of the production, is this:—'Nature—A goodly interlude of Nature, compyled by maister Henry Medwall, chapleyn to the ryght reverent father in God, Johan Morton, sometyme cardynall and archebyshop of Canterbury.' It is in folio, without date and printer's name, but most likely was from the press of John Rastell, to whom it has been usually assigned.

² Dibdin (*Typ. Ant.*, iii, 104) observes that this production is 'only in two parts'. It is very unusual for an interlude to be divided even into two parts, for that division has no reference to acts and scenes. The second part was a separate day's representation.

Morton himself, who died in 1500, at the age of ninety-three years. It was therefore written, in all probability, very soon after he had been raised to the see of Canterbury.¹ His elevation took place in 1486, so that this 'interlude' was one of the earliest productions of the kind in the reign of Henry VII.

It proceeds upon the same allegory as the three MS. Moral-plays which have been just examined—the contest between good and evil in the mind of man. It is conducted and illustrated with ingenuity, and is written with considerable ease and power, when compared with dramatic productions by which it was unquestionably preceded.

Mundus and Wordly-affection are represented sitting on the stage, 'berynge a gown and cap, and a gyrdyll for Man', when he enters, accompanied by Nature, Reason, and Innocency. Nature states that God has appointed her his Minister on earth to instruct all creatures, and delivers the following spirited stanza, in assertion of her place and power.

'Who taught the cok his wathe howres to observe,
And syng of corage wyth shryll throte on hye?
Who taught the pellycan her tender hart to carve,
For she nolde² suffer her byrdys to dye?
Who taught the nyghtyngall to recorde besyly
Her strange entunys in sylence of the nyght?
Certes, I, Nature, and none other wyght.'

She appoints Reason and Sensuality the guides of Man in

¹ Warton (*H. E. P.*, iii, 72, edit. 8vo.) observes, 'It is not improbable it was played before the archbishop'; but the author promises the second part,

'Whan my lord shall so devyse,
It shalbe at his pleasure ;'

meaning, when it shall be his pleasure to see it performed. Warton also states, without citing any authority, that 'it was printed by Rastel in 1538'.

² *i. e.*, *Ne wolde* or *would not*.

the journey of life ; but Mundus, aiding Sensuality in his seduction, Man dismisses Reason and his companion Innocency 'to the devyll of hell', laughing at the latter for being as mute 'as a grey friar'. Pride, attended by his page, soon supplies their place; and wrapt up in admiration of himself, he does not on his first entrance observe Man. Part of his speech, addressed to the audience, on his own perfections, is worth quoting.

'Wote ye not how great a lord I am,
Of how noble progeny I cam ?
My fader a knyght, my moder callyd madame,
Myne aunceters great estatys ?
And now the lyvelod¹ ys to me fall
By both theyre dethes naturall :
I am spoken of more than they all
Hens to Parys gatys . . .
I love yt well to have syde here
Halfe a wote² byneth myne ere ;
For ever more I stand in fere,
That myne nek shold take cold.
I knyt yt up all the nyght,
And the day tyme kemb yt down ryght,
And then it cryspeth, and shyneth as bryght
As any pyrled gold.'

This and some other parts of the performance are in the prevailing measure and form of versification in the Manuscript Miracle-plays ; but in the course of the piece, there are many judicious varieties, both of metre and rhyme. Pride introduces himself to Man, and whispers Sensuality, 'that all may hear', to use his influence in ingratiating him with Man. As what he says is the only prose we have hitherto met with, either in Miracles or Moralities, it may be extracted for its sin-

¹ Livelihood.

² Foot.

gularity, and because it affords another proof of the desire, on the part of Medwall, to introduce variety into his production, that the ear of the auditor might not be wearied by monotony. —‘Syr,’ whispers Pride to Sensuality, ‘I understand that thys gentylman is borne to great fortunes, and intendeth to inhabyt there in the contray ; and I am a gentylman that al way hath be brought up with great estatys, and affied with them ; and yf I myght be in lyke favour wyth thys gentylman, I wold be glad therof, and do you a pleasure.’ Man, at the recommendation of Sensuality, agrees that Pride shall attend upon him ; and while Man is gone out with Sensuality to a tavern, Pride and Worldly-affection talk upon the fitness of changing Man’s apparel : Pride thus describes the dress he shall wear, affording a curious and minute picture of the male fashions of the time.

‘Syr, our mayster shall have a gown,
That all the galandys¹ in thys town
Shall on the fassion wonder :
It shall not be sowed, but wyth a lace
Bytwyxt every some [seam] a space
Of two handfull a sonder.

‘Than, a doublet of the new make,
Close byfore and open on the bak :
No sleve upon hys arme,
Under that a shyrt as soft as sylk,
And as whyte as any mylk,
To kepe the carcas warm.

‘Than, shall hys hosen be stryped,
Wyth corselettys of fyne velvet slyped
Down to the hard kne ;
And fro the kne downward,
Hys hosen shalbe freschely gard
Wyth colours ij or thre.

¹ Gallants.

‘ And whan he is in suche aray,
There goth a rutter¹ men wyll say,
A rutter, huf,² a galand.
Ye shall se these foles on hym gase,
And muse as yt were on a mase
New brought into the land.’

After a quarrel between Man and Reason, the former striking the latter with his sword, because he would not allow him to go with a couple of prostitutes, the hero of the piece falls into the fellowship of the Seven Deadly Sins, who soon form part of his retinue ; but they all take feigned names in order to delude him : Pride is called Worship, Covetousness Worldly-policy, Wrath Manhood, Envy Disdain, Gluttony Good-fellowship, Sloth Ease, and Lechery Lust. Ere long Man discovers that he has been imposed upon, repents that he has driven away Reason, and, leaving Worldly-affection, seeks Shamefacedness. At the end of the ‘first part’ of this Moral-play, Reason is reconciled to Man, and again takes him under her guidance : it closes with these lines :—

‘ And for thys seson
Here we make an end,
Lest we shuld offend
Thys audyence, as god defend
It were not to be don.
Ye shall understand, never thelesse,
That there ys myche more of thys processe,
Wherein we shall do our besynes,

¹ Knight, *ritter*.

² In the MS. Miracle-play of *Mary Magdalen*, we have seen that an insolent coxcomb thus enters—

‘ Hof, hof, hof, a frysh new galaunt’, etc.

And our true endevure
 To shew yt unto you, after our guyse,
 Whan my lord shall so devyse :
 It shalbe at hys pleasure.'

Man still promises to be ruled by Reason, in the opening of the 'second part'; but his good resolutions are soon overthrown by Sensuality, who tells him that Margery, one of the prostitutes whom Reason forbade him to follow, had gone 'stark mad' for love of him, and had entered into 'a religious place', by which he means, in fact, the stews in Southwark.¹

¹ This joke is employed in *Cock Lorell's Bote*, printed by Wynkyn de Worde. A pardoner says—

'Syr, this pardon is new founde
 By syde London brydge in a holy grounde,
 Late called the stewes banke.
 Ye know well all, that there was
 Some relygyous women in that place,
 To whom men offred many a franke,
 And by cause they were so kynde and lyberall,
 A marveyulous aventure there is befall :
 Yf ye list to here how.
 There came suche a wynde fro Wynchester
 That blewe these women over the ryver
 In wherye, as I wyll you tell :
 Some at saynt Kateryns stroke a grounde,
 And many in Holborne were founde,
 Some at saynt Gyles, I trowe.
 Also in *ave Maria* aly, and at Westmenster,
 And some in Shoredyche drewe theder
 With grete lamentacyon.
 And by cause they have lost that fayre place,
 They wyll bylde at Colman hedge in space
 A nother noble mansyon,
 Fayrer and ever the halfe strete was,
 For every house new pavd is with gras.'

Alluding to the prostitutes of that time taking to the fields where

Thither Man proceeds; and on his return, meeting Sloth, expresses his fears that Reason had 'gathered a great company' to take him by force. A contest between the two parties ensues, Man being assisted in his resistance to Reason by some of the deadly sins; but Gluttony, who is armed with 'a chese and a botell', declines fighting. Pride also absents himself, and is rejected and disgraced by Man, who is subsequently once more reconciled to Reason by Age. He, however, still adheres to Covetise, and when Sensuality asks Envy, where Covetise had dwelt so long? we meet with the following satirical stroke at the church and the law—the more remarkable as Medwall was chaplain to a Cardinal and Archbishop. Sensuality speaking of Covetise says:—

'He dwelled wyth a prest, as I herd say;
For he loveth well
Men of the church, and they him also.
And lawyers eke, whan they may tend therto,
Wyll folow his counsell.'¹

After a conference between Man and Reason, in which the Coleman-street now stands. What is quoted would fix the date of the poem about the year 1506. Stow, referring to Fabian, says, that 'in 1506, the 21 of Henry VII, the said Stewe-houses in Southwark were for a season inhibited, and the dores closed up'. This inhibition (which proceeded from the Bishop of Winchester, whose palace was in that neighbourhood), according to the author of *Cock Lorell's Bote*, compelled the women to seek a livelihood elsewhere. 'In the year of Christ 1546 (adds Stow, *Survey*, edit. 1599, p. 332), the 37 of Henry VIII, this row of stews in Southwark was put down by the King's commandment, which was proclaymed by sounde of trumpet.'

¹ Cornyshe informs us (*Annals of the Stage*, vol. i, p. 69) that Medwall's interlude of *The Finding of Truth, carried away by Ignorance and Hypocrisy*, was 'not liked'. Perhaps the satire was too pungent at the dawn of the Reformation, and the hits too bold and well-directed. The piece is certainly long, but far from dull, and it is ingenious in its construction: the moral, probably, was not welcome.

former makes many promises of amendment, Meekness, the adversary of Pride, enters and gives his lesson: he is followed by Charity, Patience, Good-occupation, Liberality, Abstinence and Chastity. The two last consent to introduce Man to Repentance, and they take him away for that purpose: he soon returns, is welcomed by Reason, and promised salvation. The piece ends with an exhortation from Reason, and with 'a goodly ballet' (not given in the printed copy) sung by the characters on the stage.

There are several other printed Morals extant, which more or less, in conduct and moral, resemble the pieces already noticed. As three of these have been republished in our day, and are therefore accessible to everybody who wishes to examine their structure, they may be dismissed briefly.

The oldest, most likely, is *The World and the Child*, which came from the press of Wynkyn de Worde in 1522,¹ but the language is more ancient, and it was, doubtless, written before the close of the reign of Henry VII. Man is there represented in five stages of life—infancy when he is called Infans—boyhood when he is called Wanton—youth when he is called Lust-and-liking—maturity when he is called Manhood, and infirmity when he is called Age: in each of these conditions he is supposed to pass a number of years. Mundus sends him forth into the world, and he returns to his first master at every change. When Infans grows up to Manhood, he is dubbed a knight, and becomes acquainted with the seven

¹ The title is as follows:—'Here begynneth a propre newe Interlude of *The Worlde and the chylde*, otherwyse called [*Mundus and Infans*] and it sheweth of the estate of Chyldehode and Manhode.' The colophon is this:—'Here endeth the Interlude of Mundus & Infans. Imprynted at London, in Fletestrete, at the sygne of y^e Sonne, by me Wynkyn de worde. The yere of our Lorde M.CCCC and xxii. The xvii daye of July.' It is reprinted in vol. xii of the edition of *Dodsley's Old Plays* in 1825.

deadly sins, whom Conscience subsequently prevails upon him to renounce : Folly, however, postpones the reformation, and when Manhood has become Age, Conscience calls in the aid of Perseverance, who recommends confession and repentance (who are not personified), the employment of 'the five wits bodily', and of the five wits spiritual, together with a belief in the Creed, seven Sacraments, etc. Age is thus reconverted, and takes the name of Repentance.

To show the antiquity of the performance, it is only necessary to quote a few lines from one of the speeches of Mundus, which are just in the boastful alliterative strain of Herod, Pontius Pilate, etc., in the older Miracle-plays.

'Lo, syrs, I am a prynce peryllous yprovyde :
I prevyd full peryllous, and pethely I pyght.
As a lorde in eche londe I am belovyd :
Myne eyen do shyne as lantern bryght.
I am a creature comely out of care ;
Emperours and kynges they knele to my kne ;
Every man is ferde whan I do on hym stare,' etc.

The dialogue between Manhood and Folly is particularly curious as a picture of manners : there Folly gives an account of himself, and of his adventures in Holborn, Westminster Hall, the taverns and the stews in Southwark; and as nothing is said of their inhibition, there can be little hesitation in assigning a date to this piece anterior to 1506. There is a remarkable passage in the colloquy, so strong in its ridicule of friars and nuns, that it seems hardly possible, even with the example of Medwall before us, that it should have been written by an ecclesiastic.¹

¹ Manhood asks Folly to tell his adventures.

'Folye.—In feythe syr over London brydge I ran,
And the streyght waye to the stewes I came,

The Moral of *Hick Scorne*r also came from the press of Wynkyn de Worde:¹ it is without date, but it was, perhaps, published a few years later than *The World and the Child*: how long it continued a favourite with the people may be judged from the fact, that in a tract called *Martin's Month's Mind*, printed in 1589, and attributed to Thomas Nash, the phrase 'Hick Scorners jests' is used proverbially, to signify the blasphemous scurrility with which the Scriptures had been attacked by the Puritans about the middle of the reign of Elizabeth.² In fact the hero, to use Bishop Percy's words,

And toke lodgyng for a nyght;
And there I found my brother Lechery.
There men and women dyde folye,
And every man made of me as worthy,
As thoughe I hadde ben a knyght.

Manhode.—I pray the, yet tell me mo of thyne adventures.

Folye.—In feythe even streyght to all the freres,
And with them I dwelled many yeres,
And they crowned folye a kynge.

Manhode.—I praye the[e], felowe, whyder wendest thou tho?

Folye.—Syr all Englande to and fro:
In to abbeyes, and in to nonneryes also,
And alway folye dothe felowes fynde.'

¹ Dr. Dibdin (*Typ. Ant.*, ii, p. ix) says, incautiously, that 'in the drama there is no single work yet found which bears the name of Wynkyn de Worde as the printer of it'. *Hick Scorne*r is the second drama we have noticed from his press, besides the now lost *Nigramansir*, which Warton saw with the name of Wynkyn de Worde attached to it, and the date of the year 1504.

² The name became proverbial before the close of Henry VIII. In a note in his translation of *The Apothegmes* of Erasmus, printed by Richard Grafton, in 1542, Nicholas Udall makes use of it thus:—'Which publique offices, who so is a suitor to have, it behoveth the same not to plaie *Hicke Skorne*r with insolubles, and with the idle knackes of sophistications', etc.

'agreeably to his name, scoffs at religion',¹ but nevertheless he only figures in a single scene.

Pity, Contemplation, and Perseverance, lament the vices of mankind, and then give place to Freewill and Imagination, two libertines. Hick Scornor enters, and gives an account of his travels, mentioning 'the Regent', which shows that the Moral was written in the reign of Henry VII, because, in the accounts of expenses of that reign, are several entries for fitting out that ship of war. Imagination and Freewill quarrel: Pity interposes, but they, assisted by Hick Scornor, set Pity in the stocks, where he has time to inveigh against the profligacy of the age, and avails himself of it. Contemplation and Perseverance restore him to liberty, and he goes out in search of those who had thus insulted him. Meanwhile Freewill returns, and, after rather a long conference, is converted from his wicked courses by Contemplation and Perseverance. Imagination makes a short resistance, and follows his example; but Pity does not again appear, and we are left to infer, that Hick Scornor is incorrigible and irreclaimable. Although in this piece the persons are allegorical, they have individual peculiarities; and in it we find one of the earliest attempts at distinctive character, and humorous dialogue.

The 'Morall-playe' of *Every-man* (as it is called on the title-page) is one of the most perfect allegories ever formed.² Some points of its construction show that it was written at a

¹ *Reliques*, i, 136, edit. 1812. The whole piece is reprinted in Hawkins's *Origin of the English Drama*, i, 77.

² The following is its title: 'Here begynneth a Treatise how the hye Fader of Heven sendeth Dethe to somon every creature to come and gyve a counte of theyr lyves in this worlde, and is in maner of a moralle playe': the printer's colophon is this: 'Thus endeth this morall play of *Every-man*. Imprynted at London, in Poules chyrche yarde, by me John Skot.' It is in the Library of Lincoln Cathedral, and is reprinted in vol. i of Hawkins's *Orig. Engl. Drama*.

very early period, perhaps in the reign of Edward IV: it was printed once by Pynson, and twice by Skot, in no instance with the year appended; but Pynson did not print any work with a date after 1531, nor Skot after 1537.¹

The character called Every-man, is the representative of the whole human race, and, after a short prologue by a 'Messenger', the Deity delivers a soliloquy, in which he laments that the people forsake him, and 'use the seven deadly synnes damnable'. He summons Death (who it will be recollected is personified in the plays called *Ludus Coventriæ*), and sends

¹ Mr. Douce is in possession of a curious fragment of Pynson's edition, consisting of considerable portions of the last eight pages, and beginning with Sig. E i. Dr. Dibdin (*Typ. Ant.*, ii, 563) doubts whether it ever came from the press of Pynson; but Mr. Douce's fragment has fortunately the following colophon: 'Imprynted at London, in Fletestrete, at the Sygne of the George, by Richarde Pynson, prynter unto the Kynges noble grace.' It sometimes varies materially from the edition by Skot, in Lincoln Cathedral; and we subjoin the speech by the *Doc-toure* (who winds up the performance) with the words in italic that in any respect vary from the hitherto known exemplar.

'This *memory* all men maye have in mynde,
Ye herers take it a worthe, olde and yonge,
And forsake pryde, for he *deceyves* you in the ende
And remembre beaute, v *wyttes*, strength and *discrecion*:
They all *at last* do every man forsake
Save his good dedes there *do* he take.
But *beware*, for and they be small,
Before god he *hathe* no helpe at all:
None excuse may be there for every man.
Alas, *howe* shall he do than?
For after *deth* amendes may no man make
For than mercy and pyte *dothe* hym forsake.
If his rekenynge be not *clere* whan he *do* come,
God wyll *say*, ite malediciti in ignem eternum.
And he that hath his accounte hole and sounde
Hye in heven he shall be crounde.

him for Every-man. Death soon meets with the hero, delivers his message, and tells him to bring with him his 'book of counte'. Every-man is allowed to 'prove his friends', and the first he accosts is Fellowship, who refuses to accompany him on his 'longe journey', though ready to murder anybody to do his friend service. Every-man next applies to Kindred :

'My cosyn, wyll you not with me go ?

Kindred.—No, by our Lady : I have the crampe in my toe :

which is the only stroke of humour in the whole performance. Goods also refuses; and applying, in the last resort, to Good-deeds, Every-man finds her so weak that she lies on the ground, but points out to him the woful blank in his 'book of works and deeds'. She introduces him to Knowledge, and Knowledge carries him to Confession, where he calls to his aid Strength, Discretion, Beauty, and Five Wits, who promise to accompany him when he is to appear before God. Every-man soon begins to grow weak ; he says

'Alas ! I am so faynt I may not stand :

My limbs under me doth folde ;'

and arriving at the brink of the grave, he calls upon his friends to enter it with him. Beauty first refuses, and her example is followed by Strength, Discretion, and Five Wits. Good-deeds only consents to accompany him, for even Knowledge remains behind. The moral is excellent, and it is admirably illustrated, and finally enforced in a sort of epilogue delivered by 'the

Unto whiche, *please* god, brynge us all *thether*,
That we may lyve body and soule togyder.

Therto helpe the trinyte :

Amen, saye ye for saynt charyte.

'FINIS.'

From a MS. note by Mr. Douce upon his fragment, we learn that *Every-man* was twice printed by Skot, one copy being with, and the other without a colophon. We have not met with the last.

Doctor'. In the employment of this personage, it will be remarked that *Every-man* resembles some of the Miracle-plays. In the performance, it must have wanted much of the character and variety which are found in some other contemporary productions.

Of *The Interlude of Youth* we shall speak somewhat more at large, as it is only known in the two old editions, the one printed by John Waley,¹ and the other by William Copland, both without date. Although the Reformation had proceeded far towards completion before either copy could have been published, *The Interlude of Youth* is decidedly a Roman Catholic production; and we have therefore little doubt that it made its appearance during the reign of Mary. The general plan and the moral inculcated are, in a degree, similar to some of the pieces already described. Charity begins by enforcing the value of the virtue he represents, after which Youth enters, exclaiming, 'A backe, fellows, and gyve me rouse!' Charity endeavours to produce a wholesome effect on his mind, and when he tells Youth that he shall go to Heaven if he follows good advice, Youth replies with some humour:—

'What, syrs! abowe the sky?
I had nede of a ladder to climbe so hie.
But what and the ladder slyppe,
Than I am deceyved yet;

¹ It has a wood-cut on the title-page of two figures, made, in this instance by ribands over their heads, to represent 'Charitie' and 'Youth', but often otherwise employed by Waley, as they have little or nothing appropriate about them. At the end is the colophon: 'Imprinted at London by John waley, dwellyng in Foster Lane.' Waley printed between 1547 and 1558. Copland's Edition (in the Garrick collection) has also a wood-cut on the title-page, representing 'Youth' between 'Charite' and another figure which has no name over its head. The colophon is, 'Imprinted at London, in Lothbury, over against Sainct Margaryte's church, by me Wylliam Copland.' Copland printed between 1548 and 1561, and in his edition several misprints of the older copy are corrected.

And if I fall I catche a quecke ;
I may fortune to breke my necke,
And that joynte is yll to set.'

Charity retires after a vain attempt at reformation, and Riot enters, having (like New-guise in the Macro Morality) escaped from the gallows by the breaking of the rope. Riot introduces Youth to Pride, and when Youth talks of wanting a wife, Riot exclaims :—

'A wyfe ! nay, nay, for God avowe,¹
He shall have flesh inoughe,
For by God that me dere bought,
Over muche of one thing is nought.
The devyl said, he had lever burne al his lyfe,
Than ones for to take a wyfe.'

He successfully recommends Pride's sister, Lechery, for Youth's mistress, and they are about to start for the tavern, when Charity re-enters and endeavours to restrain them ; but they bind him with a chain, until he is set free by Humility. A long wordy contest ensues : Charity and Humility endeavour to incite Youth to Virtue, while Riot and Pride instigate him to all kinds of vice, but especially to gaming. The speech of Riot contains a curious enumeration of games then in use :

'Syr, can teache you to play at the dice,²
At the quenes game, and at the Iryshe,
The treygobet, and the hasarde also,
And many other games mo.
Also at the cardes I can teche you to play,
At the triumph, and one and thyrtye,
Post, pinion, and also aumsase,
And at an other they call dewsace.
Yet I can tel you more, and ye shyll con me thanke,
Pinke and drinke, and also at the blanke,
And many sportes mo.'

¹ *i. e.*, Fore God I vow. ² Copland's edit. reads 'Syr I can teache', etc.

Youth listens very impatiently to Charity and Humility, and thus irreverently replies to the remark of the former, 'that God had bought him'.

'What saye ye, mayster Charitie,
What hath God bought?
By my trouth, I knowe not
Whether that he goeth in white or blacke.
He came never at the stues,
Nor in no place where I do use.
I wis, he bought not my cap,
Nor yet my joylie hat.
I wot not what he hath bought for me.
And he bought any thyng of myne,
I wyll geve hym a quarte of wyne
The nexte tyme I hym meete.'

Charity explains in what way Christ had bought all mankind 'on the roode', and begins to make a favourable impression, which Riot and Pride in vain endeavour to counteract. Youth finally renounces them, and they abandon him. The conversion of Youth is complete, and he is promised by Charity that he shall be 'an heritour of bliss'. At the close, Humility and Charity solicit the indulgence of the 'meeke audience', and pray for them. On the whole, this piece is one of the most complete and most humorous of the class to which it belongs. We have not thought it necessary to extract any of the doctrinal matter, to prove that its author was a Roman Catholic, and an enemy of the Reformation.

There are two main points of distinction between the Moral of *Lusty Juventus*,¹ and other pieces with the same design—

¹ It is reprinted in Hawkins's *Origin*, etc., i, 113. There are two old editions of the play, one in Lincoln cathedral, the other in the Garrick collection: the title is this, 'An interlude called *Lusty Juventus*, lyvely describing the Frailtie of youth: of Nature prone to Vyce: by Grace and Good Councell traynable to vertue.' The colophon is 'Imprinted at

the one of substance and the other of form: it is a production designed to enforce Protestant tenets and to advance 'the new belief'; and it begins by representing Juventus in a state of grace through the exhortations of Good Counsel. The Devil soon afterwards enters, and employs his son Hypocrisy to seduce Juventus, which he effects by assuming the name of Friendship, and by calling in the aid of Fellowship and Abominable-living, the latter a prostitute. Good Counsel finds Juventus in the lowest state of vice and debauchery, and reclaims him, while God's Mercifull Promises undertakes to

London in Paules church yeard, by Abraham Vele at the sygne of the Lambe.' In the British Museum is a copy also by Copland with this colophon, 'Imprynted at London, in Lothbury, over agaynst Saint Margarits Church by Wylliam Copland.' It was unknown to Hawkins. Dr. Percy is probably wrong in assigning, according to Hawkins, an edition which is imperfect at the end to Pynson, as the piece was evidently written either very late in the reign of Henry VIII or in that of his son, and the last book printed by Pynson, with a date, is 1531. Abraham Vele printed between 1551 and 1581, the dates of his earliest and latest works with the year when they were published. *Lusty Juventus* concludes with a prayer 'for the prosperous estate of our noble and vertuous King', which we apprehend must mean Edward VI. The Devil would hardly have been allowed, prior to the year 1531, to speak as follows of the progress of the Reformation, on the supposition (probably mistaken) that the imperfect copy was from the press of Pynson.

'Oh, oh ! ful well I know the cause
That my estimacion doth thus decay :
The olde people would beleve stil in my lawes,
But the yonger sort leade them a contrary way.
They wyll not beleve, they playnly say,
In old traditions and made by men,
But they wyll lyve as the scripture teacheth them.'

Afterwards Hypocrisy ridicules—

'holy cardinals, holy popes,
Holy vestements, holy copes', etc.

procure him forgiveness. Throughout the piece there is much abuse of the superstitions of popery, and the Devil is made to lament its downfall as the loss of the chief instrument by which he obtained possession of the souls of men. At the end we find the words 'Finis, quod R. Wever', and, perhaps, he was the author of the piece, although he might be only its transcriber. *Lusty Juventus* is a wearisome performance compared with *The Interlude of Youth*; but it opens with the following song by the hero, which we afterwards find mentioned in another piece of the same class, and which may be fitly quoted, as an early specimen of a lyrical production, in a drama intended for public representation.

'In a herber grene, aslepe where as I lay,
The byrdes sange swete in the middes of the daye :
I dreamed fast of myrth and play.
In youth is pleasure—in youth is pleasure !

'Methought I walked stil to and fro,
And from her company I could not go ;
But when I waked, it was not so.
In youth is pleasure—in youth is pleasure !

'Therefore my hart is surely pyght
Of her alone to have a sight,
Which is my joy and hartes delyght.
In youth is pleasure—in youth is pleasure !'

There is little peculiar in any part of the dialogue beyond its heaviness, and Good-council quotes the Scriptures, chapter and verse, in a manner truly edifying, but not very dramatic.

The only material variation between Vele's edition and that by Copland is, that in the epilogue to the first, the King, *i. e.*, Edward VI, is prayed for, while in the epilogue to the last, the word 'King' is changed for 'Queen'; but so careless was Cop-

land, that he did not trouble himself to alter the corresponding rhyme : in his copy the lines stand thus :—

‘ Now let us make oure supplicacions together
For ye prosperous estate of our noble and vertuous *quene*,
That in her godly procedinges she may still persever,
Which seeketh the glory of God above all other *thynges*,’ etc.

Possibly, Copland thought, in the irregular verse of that day, that ‘queen’ and ‘thing’ rhymed sufficiently, and the word ‘meane’ might not occur to him.

GENERAL MORAL PLAYS.

THE NATURE OF THE FOUR ELEMENTS.—MAGNIFICENCE.—
THE TRIAL OF TREASURE.—THE LONGER THOU LIVEST
THE MORE FOOL THOU ART.—LIKE WILL TO LIKE.—THE
MARRIAGE OF WIT AND SCIENCE.—ALL FOR MONEY.—
THREE LADIES OF LONDON.—THREE LORDS AND THREE
LADIES OF LONDON.—CONTENTION BETWEEN LIBERALITY
AND PRODIGALITY.

THE Moral-Plays of a more general nature, and enforcing various lessons for human conduct, printed from the beginning of the reign of Henry VIII to the end of that of Elizabeth, are numerous; but the examination of some of them will be sufficient, as in their material features they often resemble each other.

One of the most singular, as well as one of the earliest of these, is an 'interlude of *The Nature of the Four Elements*',¹

¹ Dr. Percy attributes it, without citing any authority, to 'John Rastell, brother-in-law of Sir Thomas More,' and if he were not the writer, he was probably the printer of it. The only known copy is in the Garrick collection, and that is imperfect at the end, and it wants sheet D in the middle. The full title is this:—'A new interlude and a mery of the nature of the iiij elements, declarynge many proper poynts of phylosophy naturall, and of dyvers straunge landys, and of dyvers straunge effects and causes: which interlude, if ye hole matter be playde, wyl conteyne the space of an hour and a halfe, but yf ye list ye may leve out mucche of the sad mater, as the messengers pte and some of naturys parte and some of experyens pte, and yet the matter wyl depend convenyently,

the whole scheme of which is an endeavour by Nature-nature and Experience, assisted by Studious Desire, to bring Humanity to a conviction of the necessity of studying philosophy and the sciences. They are opposed in this undertaking by Sensual Appetite, Ignorance, and a Taverner; and this is, perhaps, the first instance, in a Moral-play, of the introduction of a character, the representative of a trade, or occupation, and not of some virtue, vice, or quality: these three argue with Humanity that he should only gratify his passions. The motive of the author is explained in the long prologue (spoken by a 'Messenger'), where he complains of the 'toys and trifles' printed in his time, so that while in English there were scarcely 'any works of connyng', the most 'pregnant wits' were employed in compiling 'ballads' and 'other matter not worth a mite': he adds, near the close,

'This phylosophycall work is myxyd
With mery conseytis to gyve men comfort,
And occasion to cause them to resort
To here this matter.'

All that the author on the title-page calls 'sad matter', is

and than it wyll not be paste thre quarters of an hour of length.' This is succeeded by 'the namys of the pleyers', eight in number; and it is added, 'also yf ye lyst ye may brynge in a dysgysinge.' Dr. Dibdin (*Typogr. Ant.*, iii, 105) inserts it among the works from John Rastell's press, and in a MS. note at the beginning of the copy in the British Museum, it is asserted that it was printed by him in 1519. It is perhaps impossible, until another copy is discovered, to settle with precision the date when it appeared. Ritson (*Anc. Songs*, new edit. ii, lxxii) calls *The Nature of the Four Elements* 'the earliest Morality now extant'; but he must have forgotten, or not been acquainted with, H. Medwall's Interlude of *Nature*, which was written before the commencement of the sixteenth century, whereas Henry VII is spoken of as dead in *The Nature of the Four Elements*, so that there was, perhaps, an interval of twenty years between them.

serious and dull enough, Nature and Experience lecturing with most tedious learning on points of cosmography. The following is curious, as it relates to the discovery of America, about twenty years before the piece was written;¹ and, as a compliment to Henry VII (then recently dead), he is made the cause of that discovery :—

‘ This See is called the great Occyan ;
 So great it is, that never man
 Coude tell it seth the worlde began,
 Till now within this xx yere
 Westwarde be founde new landes,
 That we never harde tell of before this,
 By wrytynge nor other meanys ;
 Yet many nowe have ben there.
 And that contrey is so large of rome,
 Much lenger than all cristendome,
 Without fable or gyle ;
 For dyvers maryners have it tryed
 And sayled streyght by the coste syde
 Above v thousand myle. . . .
 And also what an honorable thyng,
 Bothe to the realme and to the kynge,
 To have had his domynyon extendynge

¹ Dr. Dibdin and others have supposed from hence that this interlude was written about 1510, as Columbus discovered the West Indies in 1492 ; but the author says nothing of Columbus, and does not seem to have known of his existence, attributing the finding of America to Americus Vesputius, who did not sail from Cadiz until 1497 :

‘ But this newe lands founde lately,
 Ben callyd America, by cause only
 Americus *dyd* *furst* *them* *fynde*.’

This would fix the date of writing the piece about the year 1517, two years before it is supposed to have been printed, which seems more probable.

There into so farre a ground,
Whiche the noble kynge of late memory,
The moste wyse prynce the vii Herry
Causyd furst for to be founde.'

Of the 'mery conseytes' in the piece, to render it more attractive, the following part of a scene between Sensual Appetite, the Taverner, and Humanity, will serve as a specimen.

'*Sen[sual Appetite].*—Why, wyll ye folowe my counsell?

Hu[manity].—Ye.

Sen.—Then we wyll have lytell Nell,
A proper wenche, she daunsith well;
And Jane with the black lace.
We wyll have bounsynge Besse also,
And two or three proper wenchis mo,
Ryght feyr and smotter of face.

Hu.—Now, be it so: thou art saunce pere.

Ta[verner].—Than I perceyve ye wyll make gode chere.

Hu.—Why, what shulde I els do?'¹

After dinner, they discuss, thus humorously, the merits of one of the ladies recommended by the Taverner.

'*Sen.*—Mary thus, canst thou tell us yet
Where is any rose water to get?

¹ The following list of his wines, enumerated by Taverner at that date, is worth quoting:—

'Ye shall have Spayneshe wyne and Gascoyn,
Rose coloure, white, claret rampon,
Tyre, Capryck and Malvesyne,
Sak, raspyce, Alicaunt, Rumney,
Greke, ipocrase, new made clary,
Suche as ye never had;
For yf ye drynke a draught or too
Yt wyll make you, or ye thens go,
By goggs body, stark madde.'

Ta.—Ye, that I can well purvey
 As good as ever you put to your nose,
 For there is a feyre wenche, callyd Rose,
 Dystylleth a quarte every day.

Sen.—By god, I wolde a pynte of that
 Were powryd evyn upon thy pate,
 Before all this presence.

Ta.—Yet I had lever she and I
 Were both to gyther secretly ;
 For, by god, it is a prety gyrle.
 It is a worlde to se her whyrle,
 Daunsynge in a rounde.
 O lorde god, how she wyll tryp !
 She wyll bounce it, she wyll whyp,
 Ye, clene above the grounde.'

The author does not seem to have succeeded in his avowed experiment of making the stage a vehicle of scientific instruction, and we have no proof that any other writer followed his example. It does not appear where the 'disguising', mentioned in the title-page, was to be introduced, if more variety were required in the performance.

Skelton's 'goodly interlude and a merry', called *Magnyfycence*, requires examination in some detail, on account of the celebrity of its author, and of its importance as a literary composition. On the title-page he is called 'Mayster Skelton, poet-laureate', and the additional information is supplied, that at the time this Moral-play¹ was printed he was 'late deceasyd'. Warton states that it appeared in 1533, and that it was printed by Rastell; but, both these points are conjectural, inasmuch as neither date nor printer's name is found in the old copy.

¹ The Rev. T. F. Dibdin (*Ames*, iii, 106) says, that this production is 'called a Morality'; but this is a mistake. It is a Moral-play, and on the title-page it is called an 'Interlude'.

The type certainly resembles that used by John Rastell, and most likely the production came from his press. The date when it was written is also a matter of doubt, although we know that it was in existence in 1523, because Skelton mentions it with other pieces by him (some of them of the same description),¹ in his *Garlande or Chapelet of Lawrell*, which

¹ The enumeration is curious, and an extract may not be unacceptable. Skelton mentions, in the following stanzas, at least three dramatic performances—*The Sovereign Interlude of Virtue*, *The Comedy of Achademios*, and *Magnificence*, upon the latter of which he seems to dwell with unusual satisfaction—

- ' In primis the boke of honourous astate,
Item the boke how men shulde fle synne,
Item royall demenaunce worshyp to wyne,
Item the boke to speke well or be styll,
Item to lerne you to dye when ye wyll.
- ' Of vertu also the soverayne enterlude,
The boke of ye rosiar: prince arturis creacyoun,
The false fayth yt now goth which dayly is renude:
Item his dialoggis of ymagynacyoun,
Item antomedon of loves meditacyoun,
Item new gramer in englysshe compyld,
Item bowche of courte, where drede was be gyled.
- ' His com'edy achademios callyd by name,
Of tullis familiars the translacyoun;
Item good advysement that brainles doth blame,
The recule ageinst gaguine of the frenche nacyoun:
Item the popingay yt hath in commendacyoun
Ladyes and gentylwomen suche as deservyd,
And such as he counterfettis they be reservyd.
- ' And of soveraynte a noble pampholet,
And of magnyfycence a notable mater;
How cownterfet cowntenaunce, of the new get,
Wt. crafty conveyance dothe smater and flater,
And cloked collucyoun is brought in to clater
Wt. courtely abusyoun: who prynteth it wele in mynde
Moche dowblenes of the worlde therin he may fynde.

was printed by R. Faukes in that year. Skelton's *Nigra-mansir* was printed, according to Warton, in 1504, and very possibly *Magnyfycence* was written before the end of the reign of Henry VII, and while the author was tutor to Henry VIII, whose chaplain he afterwards became.

The moral purpose of *Magnyfycence* is to show the vanity of worldly grandeur. It opens with a soliloquy by Felicity, who is soon joined by Liberty, and while they are discussing the degree to which freedom ought to be allowed, Measure enters to moderate between the disputants, and he thus enlarges on his own importance.

'Oracius to recorde in his volumys olde,
With every condycyon measure must be sought :
Welthe without measure wolde bere hymselfe to bolde,
Lyberte w'out measure prove a thyng of nought.

'Of manerly margery, maystres mylke and ale,
To her he wrote many maters of myrthe,
Yet thoughe he say it ther by lyith a tale,
For margery wynshed and breke her hinder girth ;
Lor, how she made moche of her gentyll birth
Wt. gingirly go gingirly her tayle was made of hay,
Go she never so gingirly her honesty is gone a way.'

Skelton carries on the enumeration much farther, but the titles of all the other productions he mentions are to be found in a note in Warton's *Hist. Eng. Poet.*, iii, 163, 8vo. edit. The whole of this *Garlande or Chapelet of Lawrell* is a remarkable piece of egotism, and was probably written by the author in his old age. He gives the titles of at least fifty pieces from his pen, and he tells us, besides, that he had omitted many, 'as it were to[o] long a proces to reherse all by name that he hath compyl'd'. There is, I believe, but one copy of this tract in existence, that in the Royal Library : the author's vanity seems to have induced him also to place his portrait at the back of the title-page. It was reprinted by the late Rev. Mr. Dyce in 1843, in his two volumes of *Skelton's Works*.

I ponder by nomber, by measure, all thyng is wrought.
As at the fyrst orygynall by godly opynyon ;
Which provyth well that measure shold have domynyon.
Where measure is mayster, plenty dothe none offence,
Where measure lackyth, all thyng dysorderyd is ;
Where measure is absent, ryot kepeth resydence,
Where measure is ruler there is nothyng a mysse.
Measure is treasure, how say ye, is it not this ?

Magnificence is immediately afterwards introduced, and becomes acquainted with Fancy (who calls himself Largess), with Counterfeit-countenance, Crafty-conveyance, Cloked-colusion, Courtly-abusion and Folly, who also impose upon him under feigned names. Courtly-abusion offers to carry him to a young lady, whose virtue is not inaccessible, and whose beauty is described with some luxuriance of style :—

‘ A fayre maystresse,
That quickly is envyed with rudyes of the rose,
Inpurtured with features after your purpose.
The streynes of her veynes as asure Inde blewe,
Enbudded with beautye and colour fresshe of hewe,
As lyly white to loke upon her heyre,
Her eyen relucant as carbuncle so clere :
Her mouth embawmed dylectable and mery,
Her lusty lypes ruddy as a chery.’

Magnificence, ruined by his friends and retainers, falls into the hands of Adversity and Poverty, and the latter, in the following striking lines, contrasts the present with the former condition of Magnificence :—

‘ That was wonte to lye on fetherbeddes of downe,
Nowe must your fete lye hyer then your crowne.
Where you were wonte to have cawdels for your hede,
Nowe must you monche mamokes, and lumpes of brede.

And where you had chaunges of ryche aray,
 Now lap you in a coverlet full fayne that you may.
 And where that ye were pomped with what that ye wolde,
 Nowe must ye suffre bothe hungre and colde.
 With courtely sylkes ye were wonte to be drawe,
 Nowe must ye lerne to lye on the strawe.
 Your skynne that was wrapped in shertes of raynes,
 Nowe must be stormy beten with showres and raynes.'

Despair and Mischief next encounter Magnificence, and at the suggestion of the latter, who furnishes him with a halter and a knife, he is on the point of committing suicide, when Good-hope steps in, and stays his hand: he is followed by Redress, Circumspection and Perseverance, and they convince Magnificence of the weakness and vanity of his former state of exaltation, and he is content to move in a humbler and happier sphere. Several attempts are made to enliven the serious part of the 'interlude', by comic incident and dialogue, the burden chiefly resting upon Fancy and Folly, who on one occasion get Crafty-conveyance into their company, and persuade him to lay a wager that Folly will not be able to laugh him out of his coat: it is accomplished in the following humorous but not very delicate manner.

'[Here Foly maketh semblaunt to take a lowse from crafty conveyaunce shoulder.]

Fancy.—What hast thou found there?

Foly.—By god, a lowse.

Crafty-convey.—By cockes harte, I trowe thou lyste.

Foly.—By the masse, a spanyshe moght with a gray lyste.

Fancy.—Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Crafty-convey.—Cockes armes, it is not so, I trowe.

[Here Crafty conveyaunce putteth of his gowne.]

Foly.—Put on thy gowne agayne, for nowe thou hast lost.
Fancy.—Lo, John a bonam,¹ where is thy brayne?’

The versification is varied, and the length of the piece required that much should be done to lighten its weight. What were subsequently called Skeltonic verses, from the use this poet made of them (but which Skelton himself in this piece terms ‘bastarde ryme of doggrell guise’, and which were of much older invention and application), are frequently employed: the syllables are few, and the same rhyme repeated for six or eight lines together, but the effort is more ingenious than the result is agreeable. A short specimen, from a speech where Counterfeit-countenance describes himself, will be all that is necessary:

‘For counterfet countenaunce knowen am I:
 This worlde is full of my foly.
 I set not by hym a fly
 That cannot counterfet a lye.
 Swere and stare and byde therby,
 And countenaunce it clenly,
 And defende it manerly.
 A knave wyll counterfet now a knyght,
 A lurdayne lyke a lorde to fyght,
 A mynstrell lyke a man of myght,
 A tappyster lyke a lady bryght.
 Thus make I them wyth thryft to fyght;
 Thus at the last I brynge hym ryght
 To Tyburne, where they hange on hyght.’²

The moralization at the end of the piece is spoken by Redress, Circumspection, Perseverance and Magnificence; while

¹ ‘John a bonam’ is probably John a *bon homme*, then a cant name for a *blockhead*.

² Among his *Ancient Songs*, Ritson does not include any specimen by Skelton. The following song may, therefore, be worth adding in a note.

from one of the stage-directions—*Hic aliquis buccat in cornu a retro post populum*—we might gather, that it was not played merely for a Court entertainment, but before a popular assembly. The two last lines, in accordance with general custom, pray for the audience:—

‘And ye that have harde this dysporte and game,
Jhesus preserve you frome endlesse wo and shame.’

Skelton's aim in this Moral-play was against grandeur in general, but that of the anonymous ‘new and merry interlude’, under the title of *The Trial of Treasure*, was directed particularly at the vanity of wealth.¹ It was written some years before it was printed, but subsequent to *Lusty Juventus*, which in fact is mentioned in it. The characters are sixteen, but the construction is so managed that only five actors were

It is sung by Liberty on re-entering, before he finds Magnificence in adversity:—

‘With ye, mary syrs, thus sholde it be.
I kyst her swete, and she kyssyd me:
I daunsed the darlynge on my kne,
I garde her gaspe, I garde her gle
With daunce on the le, the le,
I bassed that baby with harte so free:
She is the bote of all my bale.

‘A ! so that syghe was farrefet,
To love that lovesome I wyll not let,
My harte is holly on her set.
I plucked her by the patlet,
At my devyse I wyth her met,
My fancy fayrly on her I set:
So merely syngeth the nyghtyngale.’

¹ The title is the following:—‘A new and mery Enterlude called *The Triall of Treasure*, newly set foorth, and never before this tyme imprinted.—Imprinted at Londō in Paules Churchyarde, at the signe of the Lucrece, by Thomas Purfoote, 1567.’ 4to. B.L.

necessary for the representation, no more being on the stage at any one time. The plot is this:—Lust wrestles with Just, and is overthrown: he fetches Sturdiness to assist him, but they become acquainted with Inclination, the Vice of the piece, who introduces them to Elation and Greedy-gut. Just and Sapience in vain endeavour to convert and correct Inclination; and when he is alone, force upon him the bridle of restraint, curbing him so tightly that he can scarcely move. Lust sets him at liberty again, and in recompense Inclination carries Lust to Lady Treasure (with whom he falls in love), and to her brother, Pleasure. God's visitation soon afterwards takes away Pleasure, and Time turns Treasure into 'rust and slyme'. The author promises in the 'preface' (for so he calls the prologue) to be 'merry and short'; but he is neither the one nor the other. The versification is tolerably easy, but Just, Trust and Contentation have several wearisome colloquies, varied only by the dreary singing of a psalm. Songs are also introduced, of which the following, by Lust, is the best:—

'Am not I in blessed case
 Treasure and Pleasure to possesse?
 I would not wish no better place,
 If I may still have welthines;
 And to enjoy in perfect peace,
 My Lady, Lady!
 My pleasant pleasure shall increase
 My deare Lady.

'Helene may not compared be,
 Nor Cresseda that was so bright.
 These cannot staine the shine of thee,
 Nor yet Minerva of great might.
 Thou passest Venus far away,
 Lady, Lady!
 Love thee I will both night and day,
 My dere Lady.

'My mouse, my nobs, my cony swete,
 My hope and joye, my whole delight !
 Dame Nature may fall at thy feete,
 And may yelde to thee her crowne of righte.
 I will thy body now embrace,
 Lady, Lady !
 And kisse thy swete and pleasaunt face,
 My dere Lady.'

Preceding the epilogue is the stage-direction, 'Praie for all Estates'; but no such prayer is given, and perhaps it was in a set form, or only by kneeling.

The longer thou livest the more Foole thou art, by W. Wager, must have been an amusing production of its kind, consisting of fifteen characters, although, as the title states, 'foure may playe it easely'. It appears to have been written soon after Elizabeth came to the throne, but the exact date, either of the authorship or of the publication, cannot be fixed.¹ The moral enforced is the necessity of giving children a good and godly education; the hero, Moros, being represented in the outset as an ignorant and vicious fool, acquainted only with ballads and songs, some scraps of which he enters singing. The enumeration is curious, and the stage-direction is, 'Here entreth Moros, counterfaiting a vaine gesture and a foolish

¹ It is called, 'A very mery and Pythie Commedie called The longer thou livest the more foole thou art.—A Myrrour very necessarie for youth, and especially for such as are like to come to dignitie and promotion: As it may well appeare in the Matter folowyng. Newly compiled by W. Wager.—Imprinted at London by Wyllyam How, for Richard Johnes: and are to be solde at his shop under the Lotterie house.' This is followed by a list of the characters at the back of the title. Of W. Wager, the author, nothing is known; but he may, very possibly, have been related to the 'learned clerk, Lewis Wager', who wrote the *Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalen*, 1567.

countenance, synging the foote of many songes, as fooles were wont.'

'Brome, Brome on hill,
The gentle Brome, on hill, hill ;
Brome, Brome, on Hive hill,
The gentle Brome on Hive hill,
The Brome standes on Hive hill a.¹

'Robin lende me thy bowe, thy bowe,
Robin the bow, Robin lende to me thy bow a.

'There was a Mayde come out of Kent,
Deintie love, deintie love ;

'There was a mayde cam out of Kent,
Daungerous be [she?] :
There was a mayde cam out of Kent,
Fayre, propre, small and gent,
And ever upon the grounde went,
For so should it be.²

'By a banke, as I lay, I lay,
Musinge on things past, hey how.³

¹ This is one of the ballads of Captain Cox, the Coventry mason, and it is mentioned by Laneham, in the list he supplies of them in his *Letter from Kenilworth*, 1575. 'What a bunch of ballets and songs, all ancient, as Broom, broom on hill', etc.

² Ritson found no trace of the song of the 'Maid of Kent' either before or subsequent to the date of this Moral. It is probably the same which Stephen Gosson in his *Playes Confuted in Five Actions*, says, was introduced in a play at the Theatre in or prior to the year 1582. 'As for that glosing plaie at the Theater which proffers you so faire, there is interlaced in it a baudie song of *A Maide of Kent*, and a little beastlie speech of a new stawled roge, both which I am compelled to burie in silence, being more ashamed to utter them then they.' Sign. D 6. The 'glosing plaie', was *The Play of Plays*.

³ This is another of the ballads of Captain Cox. 'By a bank as I lay',

'Tom a lin and his wife, and his wives mother,
They went over a bridge all three together :
The bridge was broken and they fell in,
The Devill go with all, quoth Tom a lin.

'Martin Swart and his man, sodledum, sodledum,
Martin Swart and his man, sodledum bell.¹

'Come over the boorne, Besse,
My little pretie Besse,
Come over the boorne, Besse, to me.²

is one of those enumerated by Laneham. See Ritson's *Ancient Songs*, i, lxxxij, edit. 1829.

¹ This song is probably as old as the reign of Henry VII. Martin Swart was sent over in 1486, by Margaret Duchess of Burgundy, to assist in an insurrection headed by Lord Lovell. Skelton alludes to it (as Ritson has remarked) in his poem 'Against a comely Coystrowne', which must have been written before 1529—

'With hey trolly loly lo, whip here Jak,
Alumbek sodyldym syllorym ben,
Curiowsly he can both counter and knak
Of Martyn Swart and all hys mery men.'

'Martin Swart and his *man*' in the Moral probably should be 'Martin Swart and his *men*.'

² This ballad seems to have been very popular in the commencement of the reign of Elizabeth. A person of the name of William Birche wrote a dialogue between Elizabeth and England, on her coming to the crown, which thus commences—

'*England*. Come over the born, bessy, come over the born, bessy,
Swete bessy come over to me,
And I shall thee take and my dere lady make,
Before all other that ever I see.'

This curious relic, which was printed by William Pickering, n. d., is preserved in the library of the Society of Antiquaries, London, and is not noticed by Ritson, who only mentions that Edgar in *King Lear* sings the three lines in the text.

'The white Dove sat on the castell wall,
I bend my bow, and shoote at her I shall,
I put her in my glove, both fethers and all.
'I layd my bridle upon the shelve :
If you will any more, sing it your selfe.'

Discipline then enters, and reproves Moros for his lightness;
to which the latter answers :—

'I have twentie mo songs yet ;
A fond woman to my mother,
As I war wont in her lappe to sit,
She taught me these, and many other.
I can sing of Robin Redbrest,
And my litle pretie Nightingale ;
There dwelleth a jolly Foster here by west,
Also, I com to drink som of your Christmas ale.'

Piety and Exercitation join their efforts to those of Discipline to reform Moros, and they find that he has at least as much knave as fool about him.¹ In reply to their exhortations, he observes—

'In S Nicholas shambles ther is inough,
Or in Eastcheape, or at Saint Katherins :
There be good puddings at the signe of the Plough ;
You never did eate better sauserlinges.

Discipline.—This folly is not his innocency,
Which can in this wise lewdly overwhart,
But it is a malicious insolence,
Which procedeth from a wicked harte.'

¹ While characters were allegorical (with few exceptions, and that of Moros one of them) the author found it necessary to guard against any personal application of his satire: he says, in the prologue—

'But truly we meane no person perticularly,
But only to specify of such generally.'

Much the same is said by the Devil in the *Ludus Coventriæ*.

While Piety and Exercitation hold Moros, Discipline scourges him, which makes him pretend contrition; but he soon relapses by the incitements of Idleness, Incontinence, and Wrath, who however profess the greatest contempt for him, Wrath calling him 'as starke an Idiot as ever bore bable', but giving him a sword and dagger (probably of wood, such as those with which the Vice was usually provided), and all promising to bring him acquainted with Nell, Nan, Megge, and Besse. One of the stews in Southwark is thus minutely described by Incontinence, as it no doubt then existed—thatched—

'You meane the thacked house by the water side,
Which is whitlymed above in the loofe.'

They leave Moros on the stage at the sight of Discipline, and Moros lets fall his sword and hides himself. Fortune then declares her purpose in exalting Moros, observing—

'Seing that the vulgares will me not prayse
For exalting good men and sapient,
I will gette me a name an other wayes,
That is by erecting fooles insipient.'

Moros, elevated to wealth, takes Impiety, Cruelty, and Ignorance as his servants, and 'disguises himself gaily in a foolish beard'. Impiety incites him against 'these *new fellows*', the Protestants, and Moros declares that he will 'hang, burn, head, and kill' them without mercy. Discipline again enters, and Moros escapes, after endeavouring to muster courage to strike him with his sword and dagger. When they have withdrawn, the stage direction is 'Here entreth People', and this impersonation complains of the cruelty and oppression of the powerful Moros. To indicate his advance in age, Moros enters 'furiously with a grey beard', and People runs away from his wrath: God's Judgment then appears 'with a terrible

vizard', and strikes down Moros: Confusion follows, and they strip Moros of his 'goodly geare', and put on him 'a fooles coate to weare'. Confusion threatens him with eternal fire, and requires him to accompany him; but Moros replies,

'Go with thee, ill-favoured knave?
I had lever thou werte hanged by the necke:
If it please the Devill me to have,
Let him carry me away on his backe.

Confusion.—I will carry thee to the Devill, in deede:
The world shalbe well ridde of a foole.

Moros.—Adew; to the Devill God send us good speede:
An other while with the Devill I must go to schole.'

We are left to conclude that Confusion carries Moros away on his back to the Devil. This is the catastrophe of the piece, which winds up with sage and pious reflections by Discipline, Piety, and Exercitation. It ought to be remarked, that the proverbial phrase, 'the longer thou livest the more fool thou art', which gives title to the Moral, is in constant use by Discipline and other characters throughout.

Ulpian Fulwel's *Like will to Like, quoth the Devil to the Collier*,¹ contains some attempts at character, although the foundation of the piece is entirely allegorical: it is by no means regularly conducted, and a good deal has been sacrificed to produce laughter among the audience. The author thus states his design in the prologue.

¹ The title is, 'An Enterlude Intituled Like wil to like, quod the Devil to the Colier, very godly and ful of plesant mirth. Wherin is declared not onely what punishment followeth those that wil rather followe licentious living then to esteem and followe good counsel: and what great benefits and commodities they receive that apply them unto vertuous living and good exercises. Made by Ulpian Fulwel. Imprinted at Lōdon, at the long shop adioyning unto S. Mildreds Churche in the Pultrie, by John Allde. Anno Domini 1568.' There was another edition in 1587, also in 4to., printed for Edward Allde, which is that we have chiefly used.

‘To what ruin ruffins and roisters are brought,
 You may heer see of them the final end :
 Begging is the best, though that end be nought,
 But hanging is the woorse, if they do not amend.
 The virtuous life is brought to honor and dignitie,
 And at the last to everlasting eternitie.’

Nichol Newfangle is the Vice, armed with his wooden dagger, and he is in fact the hero of the performance :¹ among his friends and companions are Rafe Roister, Tom Tossplot, Philip Fleming, Piers Pickpurse, Cuthbert Cutpurse, etc., who may be considered as individual personages, each with his several propensities and peculiarities. The purely allegorical impersonations consist of Good Fame, Severity, Virtuous Life, God’s Promise, and Honour. Lucifer, with ‘his name written on his back and breast’, is also introduced ; and Newfangle (who in name and nature resembles New-guise in one of the Macro MS. Moralities) claims him for his godfather, and adds that he had been apprenticed to him, and had thus learnt ‘all kinds of sciences’ that support pride :—

‘I learned to make gowns with long sleeves and winges ;
 I learned to make ruffs like calves chitterlings,
 Caps, hats, cotes, and all kinde of apparails,
 And especially breeches, as big as good barrels.’

The Collier seems introduced merely for the sake of the proverb in the title, and he does not in any way aid the progress of the plot. He enters with empty sacks, admitting that he had sold only three pecks to the bushel. Nichol New-

¹ The manner of his first entrance, as given in the stage-direction, is singular: ‘Heer entreth Nichol Newfangle, the Vice, laughing and hath a knave of clubs in his hand ; which, as soon as he speaketh, he offreth unto one of the men or boyes standing by’: *i. e.*, among the spectators who had no seats.

fangle introduces him to the Devil, and all three dance to the tune of 'Tom Collier of Croidon¹ hath solde his cole': Tom Collier uses a rustic dialect, peculiar to him. The author has paid comparatively little regard to the conduct of his Moral, as long as he is able to give variety and to illustrate his proverb, 'like will to like, quoth the Devil to the Collier', which is perpetually in the mouths of some of the characters. Rafe Roister and Tom Tossopot get drunk, and commit every kind of debauchery, but finally repent, while Pickpurse and Cutpurse are betrayed by Newfangle, and carried away by Hankee Hangman, with halters about their necks.² Virtuous Life is

¹ The Collier of Croydon figures early in our poetry; and he is thus introduced among the satirical Epigrams of Richard Crowley, printed, according to Ritson, in 1550 and 1551, and fifteen of which are reprinted by Strype, in his *Eccl. Mem.*, ii Rep. of Orig., 132.

'THE COLLIER OF CROYDON.

'It is said that in Croyden there did sometyme dwell
A collyer that did al other colyers excel.
For his riches thys collyer might have bene a knight,
But in the order of knighthood he had no delight.
Would God al our knights did mind coling no more
Than thys collyer did knighting, as is sayd before:
For when none but pore collyers did with coles mell,
At a reasonable price they did their coles sell;
But synce our knyght collyers have had the first sale,
We have payd much money, and had few sacks to tale.
A lode, that late yeres for a royal was sold,
Wyl cost now xvi shillings of sylver or gold.
God graunt these men grace their polling to refrayne,
Or else bryng them back to theyr old state agayne;
And especially the colliar that at Croyden doth sell,
For men thynk he is cosin to the collyar of hell.'

² We copy the following for its singularity, from the edition of 1568, in Malone's collection at Oxford.

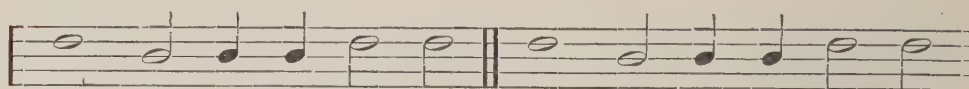
'Here entreth in Nichol Newfangle, and bringeth in with him a bag,

crowned by Honour, and Newfangle being carried off on the Devil's shoulders, poetical justice is done on both sides.

The following, from a speech by Virtuous Living to the spectators in the course of the performance, will be a sufficient specimen of the serious part of the production.

'Wherefore, you that are heere learn to be wise,
And the end of the one with the other waye,
By that time you have heard the end of this play.
But why do I thus much say in praise of vertue,
Sith the thing praise worthy need no praise at all?

a staffe, a bottle, and two halters, going about the place shewing it unto the audience, and singeth this :



Trim mar - chan - dice, trim, trim. Trim mar - chan - dice, trim, trim.

[He may sing this as oft as he thinketh good.]

'Mary ! heer is merchandise, who list to buy any?
Come see for your love and buy for your money.
This the land which I must distribute anon,
According to my promise or I begon :
For why, Tom Tossplot since he went hence
Hath increased a noble just to nine pence,
And Rafe Roister, it may none otherwise be chosen,
Hath brought a pack of wull to a faire paire of hosen.
This is good thrift, learn it who shall :
And now a couple of felowes are come from cut-purse hall,
And there have they brought many a purse to wrack :
Lo ! heer is geer that will make their necks to crack.'

[Shewing a halter.]

Just afterwards Tom Tossplot and Rafe Roister enter in great poverty, having squandered and gambled away all their money. The following singular stage-direction introduces them : 'Heere entreth Rafe Roister and Tom Tospot, in their dublet and hose, and no cap nor hat on their head, saving a night cap, because the strings of their beards may not be seene ; and Rafe Roister must curse and ban as he commeth in.'

It praiseth it self sufficiently, it is true,
Which chaseth away sinne, as bitter as gall :
And where vertue is it need not be praised,
For the renowne therof shall soon be raised.'

The exits and entrances of the characters are marked with great punctuality, and the stage-directions are unusually frequent and minute.

The Moral-play of *The Marriage of Wit and Science*¹ contains a remarkable external feature, not belonging to any other piece of this class that we remember to have met with : it is regularly divided into five acts, and each of the scenes is also marked. It has no date on the title-page, but it was licensed (according to Malone in a note in his copy of this most rare performance) between July 1569 and July 1570. The author, whoever he might be, has bestowed great pains upon his undertaking, and the construction of it is sufficiently ingenious, conveying, not without some humour, a very useful lesson.²

¹ Its title is : 'A new and Pleasaunte enterlude, intituled the mariage of Witte and Science.—Imprinted at London, in Fletestrete, neare unto saint Dunstones church, by Thomas Marshe.' n. d. 4to.

² It should be observed, however, that for the whole of the allegory the author of *The Marriage of Wit and Science* was indebted to an older piece, by a person whose name is new in our dramatic literature—John Redford. He seems to have been a professor of music, employed at Court : he was contemporary with John Heywood, and, like him, wrote several dramatic pieces. One of these, nearly complete, is contained in a very curious MS. belonging to Mr. B. Heywood Bright, which he was kind enough to place in our hands : in the same volume are traces of two other Morals, one of which has the name of John Redford appended. That upon which *The Marriage of Wit and Science* is founded (or more properly, from which it is in a great degree borrowed) has this conclusion, 'Thus endyth the play of *Wyt and Science*, made by master Jhon Redford.' The author of the printed copy has done little more than modernise the style of Redford, for, with one or two slight variations, he has adopted the whole conduct of the plot : one of the varia-

Wit is represented as the son of Nature, and he has fallen in love with Lady Science, the daughter of Reason and Expe-

tions is, that in Redford's 'play' Confidence is made the attendant upon Wit instead of Will; and another, that Tediousness, instead of being represented as a giant, is made 'a fiend' by Redford. Four persons, called Fame, Riches, Worship, and Favour, are also introduced by Redford, in order to sing a song and to be dismissed to the World, from whom they came, by Science who disregards them. Redford also has a long scene between Idleness and Ignorance, in which the former attempts to instruct the latter, who, as in the printed performance, is exhibited as an ill-disposed fool, and so clothed: when Wit, dressed as Ignorance, surveys himself in a glass Reason had given him, he finds that he is—

'Deckt, by gogs bones, lyke a very asse:
Ignorance cote, hoode, eares; ye, by the masse,
Kokscome and all.'

A few specimens from this very singular performance, which at the close prays for 'the King and Queen', and was clearly written late in the reign of Henry VIII, cannot be unacceptable. Confidence enters with 'the picture' of Wit, which he is about to convey to Lady Science, as a token of his master's love to her.—

'Ah syr, what tyme of day yst? who can tell?
The day ys not far past, I wot well;
For I have gone fast, and yet I see
I am far from where as I wold be.
Well, I have day inowgh yet, I spye;
Wherfore, or I pas hens, now must I
See thys same token heere, a playne case,
What Wyt hath sent to my ladyes grace.
Now wyll ye see a goodly pycture
Of Wyt hym sealfe, hys owne image sure;
Face, bodye, armes, leggs, both lym and joynt,
As lyke hym as can be in every poynt.
Yt lacketh but the lyfe: well, I con hym thanke;
Thys token in deede shall make sum cranke,
For what wyth thys pycture, so well faverde,
And what wyth those sweete woordes, so well saverde,

rience: Wit wishes to obtain her hand in marriage at once, but his mother Nature informs him, that Science is only to be

Dystyllyng from the mowth of Confydence,
Shall not thys apose the hart of Science?
Yes, I thanke God, I am of that nature
Able to compas thys matter sure,
As ye shall see now, who lyst to marke yt,
How neatly and featly I shall warke yt.'

The fiend Tediousness, who 'cumeth in with a vyser over hys face', to make him look like a devil, swears by Mahound, in the usual style of the old Miracles, and after he has defeated Wit, when not duly armed and prepared for the encounter, he exclaims—

'Lye thow there. Now have at ye, kaytyves:
Do ye fle, i fayth? a, horeson theves!
By Mahownds bones, had the wreches taryd,
Ther necks wythowt heds they showld have caryd.
Ye, by Mahownds nose, myght I have patted them
In twenty gobbets I showld have squatted them,
To teche the knaves to cum neere the snowte
Of Tediousnes: walke funder abowte,
I trow, now they wyll; and as for thee
Thow wylt no more now troble mee:
Yet lest the knave be not safe i nowghe,
The horeson shall bere me an other kuffe.
Now ly styll, kaytyve, and take thy rest,
Whyle I take myne in myne owne nest.'

It is said in the stage-directions, that Wit 'dieth' in consequence of his wounds, but he is very soon revived by Honest Recreation, and others, who, after a contest of words, are obliged to give up Wit to Idleness and Ignorance. Idleness thus abuses Honest Recreation—

'The Dyvyll and hys dam can not devyse
More devylyshnes then by the[e] doth ryse:
Under the name of honest recreacion
She bryngth in her abhominacion.
Mark her dawnsyng, her maskyng and mummyng,
Where [is] more concupyscence then ther cunnyng?

won by labour and perseverance. Nature, however, gives him Will for his servant, and desires him to try his fortune. When Will hears that his young Master is going upon a matrimonial adventure, he is alarmed and warns him to keep his wife, whoever she may chance to be, in strict subjection—

‘Breake her betymes, and bring her under by force,
Or elles the graye mare will be the better horse.’

Lady Science is represented coy and retiring; but being prevailed upon by her parents to admit suitors, Will delivers to her Wit’s portrait, and she agrees to receive his courting visits. When Wit arrives, Reason introduces him to his friend Instruction, who has two servants named Study and Diligence;

Her cardyng, her dycyng dayly and nyghtlye.
Where fynd ye more falcehod then there? not lyghtly:
Wyth lyeng and sweryng by no poppets,
But teryng God in a thowsand gobbets.
As for her syngyng and pypyng and fydlyng,
What unthryftynes therein is twydlyng.
Serche the taverns, and ye shall here cleere
Such bawdry as bests wold spue to heere;
And yet thys is kald honest recreacion,
And I, poore Idlenes, abhomynacion.’

The second contest between Wit and Tediousness (after the former is armed with the ‘sword of comfort’, sent by his lady on his repentance and reformation, and after he has been duly instructed by Diligence and Study) takes place within sight of Parnassus, upon which Science is seated to behold the conflict. After the victory, and before his marriage with Science, Wit puts on ‘the gown of knowledge’. Several songs are sung in the course of the performance, and they are inserted in the same MS. volume, though not in the places to which they belong. The division of the Moral-play into acts and scenes was the work of the anonymous author who revived and modernised the production of John Redford. The same MS. contains many very curious and amusing songs by John Heywood and his contemporaries.

and Science consents to marry Wit after he shall have been for three or four years under their tuition. She also requires him, as her knight, first to conquer Tediousness, a great giant, and her deadly foe. Coming hastily to the encounter, not duly prepared, Tediousness gives Wit a blow, which throws him into a trance; but he is recovered by Recreation, who sings to him a song while he dances: he exclaims—

‘Will daunsing serve, and I will daunce untill my bones be sore.
Pype us up a galiard, mynstrel, to begynne.’

Recreation soon leaves him, and Wit falls into the hands of Idleness and Ignorance; and after he is tired with dancing, the former lays him in her lap and sings as follows:—

‘Come, come, lye downe, and thou shalte see
Non lyke to mee to entertayne
Thye bones and thee, opprest with payne:
Come, come and ease thee in my lappe,
And, yf it please thee, take a nappe;
A nappe that shall delight thee soo,
That fancies all wyll thee forgoe.
Bye musinge styll what canst thou fynde,
But wantes of wyll and restles mynde?
A mynde that marres and mangles all,
And breadeth jarres to worke thy falle.
Come, gentle Witte, I thee requyre,
And thou shalt hytt thy chiefe desyre,
Thy chiefe desyre, thy hoped praye:
Fyrste ease thee here, and then away.’

Wit thus falling asleep, Idleness and Ignorance strip him, and put upon his back the fool’s dress of the latter; so that, when Reason and Science find him, they deny all knowledge of him. Wit, not at all aware of the disguise in which he appears, exclaims—

‘ Hope holiday ! mary, this is preety cheere.
 I have lost my selfe, I can not tell where.
 An old sayd sawe it is, and to true I finde,
 Soone hot sone cold, out of sight out of mind.’

Wit, at length surveying himself in a glass, which Reason had given him early in the piece, becomes sensible of his disgraceful appearance: Shame, introduced by Reason, then scourges Wit, until Science interposes for mercy. Wit repents, is again taken into favour, and with the aid of Instruction, Study, and Diligence again encounters Tediousness in the sight of his mistress, whom he entreats to behold the conflict—

‘ Here in my sight, good Madam, sitte and viewe,
 That, when I list, I may looke uppe on you :
 This face, this noble face, this lively hiew
 Shal harden me, shal make our enemye rue.’

Wit strikes off the head of Tediousness after a severe contest, and presents it to Science ; and the piece ends with the union of Wit and Science amidst the rejoicings of Reason, Experience, Instruction, Study and Diligence, in which also Will heartily joins. Wit thus concludes—

‘ My payne is paste, my gladnes to beginne,
 My taske is done, my hart is set at rest,
 My foe subdued, my Ladyes love possest.
 I thancke my frends whose helpe I have at neede ;
 And thus you see howe Witte and Science are agreed.
 Wee twaine hence forth one soule in bodyes twayne must dwel :
 Rejoyse I pray you all with mee, my frendes, and fare ye well.’

This well-constructed piece was probably performed by boys, as Will is represented to be twelve years old, and Wit not more than seventeen.

Lupton's *All for Money*¹ is one of the most elaborate and

¹ The wording of the title-page is somewhat curious: it is called, ‘A

involved of our later Morals, and the characters engaged in it are no less than thirty-two in number: among how many actors they might be divided, we are not informed by the author. It professes to represent 'the manners of men and fashion of the world' at the date when it was produced, but it is anything but a picture of manners, and the author directs his attack in various ways against avarice. On the title-page he terms his work a 'pitiful comedy', and in the prologue, he tells us that it is also a 'pleasant tragedy', but it has no pretensions to be considered for a moment either the one or the other.

Theology, Science, and Art lament the devotion of all classes to the acquisition of Money: Money then enters, and being taken suddenly ill on the stage, vomits Pleasure, the direction being, 'Here Money shal make as though he would vomit; and with some fine conveyance, Pleasure shall appeare from beneath, and be there apparelled': in her turn, Pleasure vomits 'Sinne, being the Vyce', with his wooden dagger:¹ Sin, afterwards, in the same way produces Damnation with 'a terrible vizard', and his garments painted with flames of fire; and Satan soon joins the party. The Devil 'cries and roars' lustily when he thinks Sin is about to desert him, who, however, is stayed by meeting Pride and Gluttony. Long conferences ensue between Learning-with-money, Learning-without-money, Money-without-learning, and Neither-money-nor-learning; after which, All-for-money makes his appear-

moral, and pitieful Comedie, intituled *All for Money*. Plainly representing the manners of men and fashion of the world nowe adayes. Compiled by T. Lupton.—At London. Printed by Roger Warde and Richard Munde, dwelling at Temple Barre. Anno 1578.' 4to.

¹ Just after he is born, he exclaims—

'I was afraied of nothing, but onely of my dagger,
Lest in the time of my birth it would have sticked my fater.'

ance, 'apparelled like a ruler or magistrate', to whom Sin, the Vice, acts as servant. All his suitors and clients come before him—Gregory Graceless, Moneyless-and-friendless, William-with-the-two-wives, Nichol-never-out-of-the-law, Sir Laurence Livingless,¹ and finally, Mother Croote, who, being a hundred years old and very rich, wishes to purchase a young husband of twenty-three. Moneyless-and-friendless is kicked out; but to all the rest, on receiving certain presents, All-for-money makes liberal promises. This brings us to the catastrophe, or enforcement of the moral, showing the consequences of avarice:—'Judas commeth in like a damned soule in blacke, painted with flames of fire, and with a fearefull vizard'; and he is followed by Dives, 'with such like apparel as Judas hath'. Damnation pursues them, and drives them before him, while they make 'a pitiefull noyse'. Godly Admonition moralizes on all that has been represented, and being joined by Virtue, Humility, and Charity, the wearisome and complicated piece concludes.

It would be easy to enumerate more productions of this class, and to extend to a much greater length the analysis of them, without exhausting the subject, however it might try the reader's patience. *The Three Ladies of London*, 1584,²

¹ A short quotation from what is said by Sir Laurence Livingless, a Roman Catholic priest, will farther show the protestant tendency of *All for Money*. Sin asks him how many Epistles St. Paul wrote, and Sir Laurence thus answers:—

'By the masse, he writ to manie. I would they were all burned;
For had they not bene, and the New Testament in English [turned]
I had not lacked living at this time, I wisse.
Before the people knew so much of the Scripture,
Then they did obeye us, loved us out of measure;
And now we can not go in the streetes without a mocke;
The litle boyes will say, 'Yonder goes Sir John Smell-smocke.'

² This performance seems to have been popular, and it is mentioned

and *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*, 1590, are among the latest specimens of the kind, and in which an attempt is made to diversify the performance by a good deal of temporary allusion and general satire. The moral of the first of these productions, as it is stated on the title-page, precisely explains the nature of it: 'wherein is notablie declared and set forth how, by meanes of Lucar, Love and Conscience is so corrupted, that the one is married to Dissimulation, the other fraught with all Abhominacion.' An illustration of the temporal allusions may be taken from *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*: the Clown of the performance is named Simplicity, and he carries a basket full of wares, ballads, and prints. Among the ballads he enumerates, 'Chipping Norton, a mile from Chappell o' the heath'—'a lamentable ballad of the burning of the Pope's dog'—'the sweet ballade of the Lincolnshire bagpipes'—and 'Peggy and Willy', with the mournful burden—

' But now he is dead and gone,
Mine own sweet Willy is laid in his grave.
La, la, la,' etc.

One of the allegorical characters, afterwards takes a 'picture' out of the Clown's basket, and asks whom it represents? Simplicity replies that it is Tarlton, which is followed by the question, 'What was that Tarlton?' Simplicity then informs him that Tarlton was originally a water-bearer, adding—

' O, it was a fine fellow as ere was borne !
There never will come his like while the earth can corne.
O, passing fine Tarlton ! I would thou hadst lived yet. . . .

in more than one tract of the time: after the publication of *The Three Lordes, etc., of London*, in 1590, *The Three Ladies of London* was reprinted in 1592.

But it was the merriest fellow, that had such jestes in store,
That if thou hadst seene him, thou wouldst have laughed thy
hart sore.'

This Moral was printed two years subsequent to Tarlton's death, which happened on the 3rd of September 1588;¹ and it was probably first acted soon after that event. It is to be observed also, with reference to this production, that the greater part of it is in blank verse, a circumstance that does not belong to any other Moral that we are aware of.

A still later, and a duller performance of this class is *The Contention between Liberality and Prodigality*, 1602, which, as

¹ The Prologue to *Cuck-queanes Errant and Cuckold's Errant*, is supposed to be spoken by Tarlton's Ghost, and he there mentions his own death in the year of the defeat of the Armada. This play is in MS. in a volume containing five others by the same author (William Percy, writer of *Sonnets to the Fairest Cælia*, 1594). The name of W. Percy is now, for the first time, connected with our dramatic literature, but his productions of this kind, like his sonnets, have little merit; as, however, they importantly illustrate the condition of the stage at the period when they were written (soon after the year 1600), we may have occasion to refer to them hereafter. They are all in the peculiar handwriting of the author, who subscribes most of them in the following manner:—

Quo pa factu vocent.
W. P. Esqner.

His name is nowhere inserted at length, but his authorship has been clearly ascertained. He was of the old Northumberland family.

One of the latest notices of Richard Tarlton occurs in a tract printed in 1642, called *The Pigge's Corantoe, or Newes from the North*, where the following lines are attributed to him, which have since often received a different application:—

'The King of France, with forty thousand men,
Went up a hill, and so came downe agen.'

This is called in the tract of 1642 'old Tarlton's song'.

is stated on the title-page, and as appears by the epilogue, was acted before Queen Elizabeth. The forty-third year of her reign is mentioned in the body of the piece; but it possesses few of the improvements which, towards the close of the sixteenth century, were introduced into Moral-plays. Our only reason for mentioning it is, that it was one of the last, as well as one of the worst, of its kind. It has been attributed to the celebrated Robert Greene, and he might, possibly, have had some concern in it prior to 1592.

We ought, perhaps, to have noticed earlier, among dramas of in some respects a comic character, but of decidedly a religious tendency, a manuscript preserved in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, which contains some peculiar features. It is a religious play of a date, probably, not much anterior to the reign of Henry VIII, the avowed object of which is to enforce the doctrine of the divinity of the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Certain Jews have obtained possession of a portion of the holy wafer, and determine to expose it to every species of torture and trial, to ascertain its power and divinity—whether, in fact, the doctrine of ‘the real presence’ were true or false. We need not enter into detail regarding the trials to which the Host is exposed by its enemies; but we may mention that, for the sake merely of what, in the language of the stage, is called ‘comic business’, a Dutch or German Doctor is introduced, and figures very prominently near the conclusion of the performance, though he does not in any way contribute to what may be considered the catastrophe: that catastrophe is thus brought about. The Jews having failed in all their attempts by force and fire to destroy the holy wafer, at last resolve to put it into an oven in which they light a blazing fire; into this fire they throw the wafer, shut the door, and await the result. Presently they are alarmed, and, indeed, struck down by a tremendous noise, followed by an awful ex-

plosion: the oven bursts, the fire blazes, and in the smoke the Saviour is seen to ascend to Heaven where he is received by a chorus of Angels. It need hardly be added, that the Jews are supposed to be converted on the spot, and the drama ends with the triumph of the holy wafer. The dialogue of the piece is of the usual description in Miracle-plays, as handed down from times anterior to the period when this production was, probably, last performed, and it may be conjectured that the Doctor of Medicine was a late introduction for the better amusement of spectators. It is purely a Miracle-play, and it is obvious that some portions of it are more modern than others; and that various passages, and even entire speeches, were inserted, from time to time, containing temporary allusions, with an especial view to the gratification of spectators. No portion, however, can have been much older than a period when protestant doctrines on the question of the Eucharist began to prevail: against these it was especially directed. The Doctor is a mere piece of comic characterism, in no way contributing to support the dogma of the divine presence in the Sacrament, and all the other characters are supposed to be malignant and incredulous Israelites.

MORAL-PLAYS

RESEMBLING COMEDY AND TRAGEDY.

TOM TILER AND HIS WIFE.—CONFLICT OF CONSCIENCE.—
DISOBEDIENT CHILD.—JACK JUGGLER.—CAMBYSES.—
APPIUS AND VIRGINIA.—ALBION.—COMMON CONDI-
TIONS.—NICE WANTON.

THE dramatic pieces we now propose to examine make advances, more or less distant, to tragedy, to comedy, and to that species of theatrical performance which our ancestors called 'history', although, in form and substance, they are still to be classed with Moral-plays. They consist of a sometimes rather incongruous mixture of individual character and allegorical impersonation. It has been seen in a few of the productions of this kind already reviewed, that attempts were made at a very early date to invest symbolical representatives with metaphysical as well as physical peculiarities, and to attract for them a personal interest.

One of the most remarkable pieces of this description is called *Tom Tiler and his Wife*, which was first published in 1578,¹ and again in 1661, and which, in the last edition, professes on the title-page to be a republication of an interlude 'printed and acted about a hundred years ago'.² It affords

¹ On this point we follow Ritson, *Ancient Songs*, ii, 31, edit. 1829. We have seen no copy older than that of 1661 in any collection, but he was no doubt as correct as usual.

² It was reprinted by F. Kirkman, to whose account some knavish tricks of the bookselling trade have been laid: in this instance, however, he was guilty of no imposition. It bears for title, in his edition: *Tom*

some internal evidence that it was produced not very long after the rebellion of 1569. We learn from the prologue that, like

Tyler and his Wife. An excellent old Play, as it was Printed and Acted about a hundred years ago. The second Impression. London: printed in the year 1661.' 4to. At the end is a list of the plays which Kirkman had then on sale, including many very curious dramas: in what way he became possessed of them may partly be gathered from the following account which he gives of himself, and of his connexion with the stage, in a volume he printed in 1673, called *The Unlucky Citizen*, the introduction to which bears date the 23rd of August in that year, on which day Kirkman was exactly forty-three years old:—

'It may be I may make bold with the plot or story of an English stage-play, when it is fit to my purpose. I am sure those stories must be good, for our English comedies and tragedies exceed all other nations now in every thing. I know that the French did exceed us in ornaments of the stage, gallantry of apparel, variety of music and dancing, and strangeness of their machines: but now we are grown up to them, and in all things equal them in these outside matters; and as to the inside, the soul of the play, which is the plot, contrivance and language, we still outdo them and all the world. This is my opinion: You may, if you please, give me leave to be a competent judge of these things; for I have been a great lover of them, a student in and well-wisher to these mathematics, as I shall acquaint you anon: for now being a freeman, having my liberty to come and go, when and where I listed, I studied my pleasure and recreation, the chiefest of which, and the greatest pleasure that I took, being in seeing stage-plays. I plied it close abroad, and read as fast at home, so that I saw all that in that age I could: and when I could [not] satisfy my eye and my ear, with seeing and hearing plays acted, I pleased myself otherwise by reading; for I then began to collect, and have since perfected my collection of all the English stage-plays that were ever yet printed; and I have them all, and have read them all, and therefore I suppose my judgment may pass as indifferently authentic. And I have had so great an itch at stage-playing, that I have been upon the stage, not only in private to entertain friends, but also on a public theatre: there I have acted, but not much, nor often; and that itch is so well laid and over, that I can content myself with seeing two or three plays in a year; but I still continue in this opinion, that they are the fittest divertisements for our English gentry.'—p. 258.

many other pieces of about the same date, it had been performed by youths :—

‘To make you joy and laugh at merry toys,
I mean a play set out by pretty boys.’

The plot is a mere piece of merriment relating to the sufferings of Tom Tiler under the affliction, and infliction, of a shrewish wife. It is opened by Destiny, called ‘a sage parson’, and Desire ‘the Vice’; and from what passes between them, it appears that Destiny has married Tom Tiler to a wife named Strife, under whom he leads a most miserable existence; for, besides being a scold, she is fond of drinking with her two acquaintances, Sturdy and Tipple. Tom Tiler meets his friend, Tom Tailor, ‘an artificer of shreds and patches’, and communicates his sufferings. Tom Tailor proposes to change clothes with Tom Tiler; and thus disguised as her husband, Tom Tailor gives Strife so sound a beating that, after the humblest submission, she is obliged to take to her bed. Tom Tiler then obtains his own clothes again from Tom Tailor, and returning home, he compassionates his suffering wife’s condition, and goes to bed to her. She is still ignorant of the trick, and declares that she never can love him again after the beating he has given her: Tom Tiler unwarily acknowledges that Tom Tailor had done it for him, and Strife says,

‘Alas! I may mone; I might have been wone
With half these strokes, but curstnesse provokes
Kind hearts to dissever, and hatred for ever
Most commonly growes by dealing of blowes.
Therefore blame not me, if I cannot love ye
While we two have life.

T. Tiler.—By my halydome, wife,
Because ye say so, now shall ye know,
If you will content you, that I do lament you;

For I will tell you true, when I saw you
 Ever brawling and fighting, and ever crossebiting,
 Which made me still wo, that you should thus do,
 At last hereafter I complained the matter
 To Tom Taylor, my master ; who taking a waster,¹
 Did put on my coat, since you will needs know it,
 And so being disguised, he interprised
 To come in my steed ; and having my weed,
 You pleading your passion after the old fashion,
 Thinking it was I, stroke him by and by.
 Then straight did he, in steed of me,
 Currie your bones, as he said, for the nones,
 To make you obey.

Strife.—Is it even so as you say ?

God's fish ! you knave, did you send such a slave
 To revenge your quarrel in your apparel ?
 Thou shalt abide,² as dearlie as I—'

and then she snatches up the stick, and 'lays load upon him'
 most unmercifully, until he exclaims—

'Oh, wife, wife ! I pray thee save my life !
 You hurt me ever, I hurted you never.
 For God's sake, content thee.

Strife.—Nay, thou shalt repent thee,
 That ever Tom Tayler, that ruffian and railer,
 Was set to beat me : he had better he had eat me.'

¹ A *waster* is a strong stick or stake.

² This word would tend to prove the genuineness of the production, as printed by Kirkman, if we had no other evidence. The old word was 'aby', which is found in *Ferrex and Porrex*, and many other authorities of the time—

'Thou, Porrex, thou shalt dearly 'bye the same'; and the old author of *Tom Tiler and his Wife* made it rhyme to 'I' in the same line; but Kirkman, thinking it obsolete, altered it to 'abide', and so lost the jingle of the original impression.

Tom Tiler escapes to his friend Tom Tailor, and relating his disaster and the cause of it, the latter abuses him and strikes him in the presence of Destiny. Strife enters, and reviles both, until Patience arrives and composes all matters in difference, rendering Tom Tiler contented with his wife, and Strife more merciful to her husband. The whole is written in short couplets, two of which the printer, to save room, has usually placed in one line. Six songs are interspersed in various lyrical measures, but none of them of any peculiar merit, comic or serious.

*The Conflict of Conscience*¹ by Nathaniel Woodes, Minister of Norwich, is one of the earliest Moral-plays in our language in which an historical character is introduced; and then only under the feigned name of Philologus, though the fact is stated in the Prologue, that by Philologus is meant Francis Spiera, an Italian lawyer, who, as the title-page expresses it, 'forsooke the truth of God's Gospel for fear of the loss of life and worldly goods'. He committed suicide, according to Sleidan,² in the year 1548, and his story and fate became soon afterwards very notorious in this country. The moral, or, as the author terms it, 'comedy', which relates to his backsliding and suicide, was not printed until 1581, but it had been written at least twenty years earlier. The characters in it are real and allegorical, the former including Spiera, his two sons, Cardinal

¹ The following is its title at large.—'An excellent new Commedie Intituled, *The Conflict of Conscience*. Contayninge a most lamentable example of the dolefull desperation of a miserable worldlinge, termed by the name of Philologus, who forsooke the trueth of God's Gospel, for feare of the losse of lyfe and worldly goods. Compiled by Nathaniell Woodes, Minister in Norwich. [Sixteen 'Actors names, devided into six partes'.] At London, Printed by Richarde Bradocke, dwelling in Aldermanburie, a little above the Conduict. Anno 1581.' 4to, b. 1. It was reprinted a few years ago by the Roxburgh Club.

² In his *XXIX Livres d'Histoire*, etc., fol. Geneva, 1563, Liv. 21.
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Eusebius, etc., and the latter Conscience, Hypocrisy, Tyranny, Spirit, Avarice, Horror, Sensual-suggestion, etc. The story, such as it is, is thus conducted.—Philologus is represented as a rich and zealous partisan of the Reformation: Tyranny receives orders from Rome to search for heretics, in which search he is aided by Hypocrisy and Avarice: Caconos, a Catholic priest speaking the Scotch dialect,¹ directs them to the house of Philologus. The Cardinal summons Philologus before him, and the Reformer defends his tenets until threatened with imprisonment and torture: Sensual-suggestion then induces him to return to popery. During a scene with his sons, Spirit, Conscience, and Horror attack Philologus, and Eusebius and Theologus are sent to give him spiritual consolation. Philologus cannot pray, refuses to listen to their counsel, and rushes out: a Nuntius then informs the audience, that after thirty weeks of affliction and despair, which are supposed to elapse, Philologus had hanged himself.

¹ He is also represented in the lowest state of ignorance, knowing his Mass-book, or Portas, only by the illuminations: the following is his description of it, and of his mode of doing duty; and it may also serve as a specimen of his dialect, then a novelty on the stage:—

‘Far in my portace the tongue ay [I] de nat knowe,
 Yet when ay see the great gilded letter
 As ken it sea [so] well, as nea man ken better:
 As far example; on the day of Chraistes Natyvitie
 Ay see a Bab in a manger, and two beasts standing by.
 The service whilk to newyeares day is assaygnd
 Bay the paicture of the Circumcision ay faynd.
 The service whilk on Twalfth day mun be don
 Ay seeke bay the marke of the three kynges of Colon.
 Bay the Devill tentyng Chraist ay faind *wradragesima*:
 Bay Chraist on the crosse ay serche out Gude Frayday.
 Pasch for his marke hath the Resurrection:
 Ayenst Hally Thursday is pented Chraistes Assention.
 Thus in mayn owne buke ay is a gude clarke.’

There is nothing in the language of the piece which deserves particular observation. The versification is generally heavy and cumbrous, often in lines of fourteen syllables, and the performance must have been a dull one, although the author endeavoured 'to refresh the minds of the auditors' by 'some honest mirth', which only consists of a contention between Hypocrisy, Tyranny, and Avarice, for superiority, ending in the admission of equality. It is, therefore, not worth extracting; and the subsequent two stanzas from a speech by Philologus, in answer to those who wished to console him in his disgrace and affliction, is certainly the best specimen of the serious portion of the Moral.

'The healthfull neede not phisicks art, and ye which are all haile
Can give good counsell to the sicke their sicknesse to eschew;
But here, alas! confusion and hell doth mee assaile,
And that all grace from me is reft I find it to be true.
My heart is steele, so that no faith can from the same insue.
I can conceive no hope at all of pardon or of grace,
But out, alas! confusion is alway before my face.

'And certainly, even at this time, I doo most playnly see
The devils to be about me rounde, which make great preparation,
And keepe a stirre here in this place, which only is for mee.
Neither doe I conceive these things by vaine imagination,
But even as truly as mine eyes beholde your shape and fashion.
Wherefore, desired Death, dispatch: my body bring to rest,
Though that my soule in furious flames of fire be supprest.'

Satan is introduced in person, as a great friend of the Pope, whom he calls his 'darling dear', and his 'eldest boy', and he interests himself deeply in the apostacy of Philologus.

The Disobedient Child,¹ by Thomas Ingeland, 'late Student in Cambridge', is less, perhaps, like a Moral-play than any piece

¹ The following is the title it bears:—'A pretie and mery new Enterlude, called *The Disobedient Child*. Compiled by Thomas Ingelend, late

we have yet noticed, since the introduction of the Devil, in the usual manner, constitutes its strongest resemblance to that species of dramatic representation. The hero is called 'the Rich-man's son', and he has married 'the young woman' (whose name afterwards appears to be Rose) against his father's wishes; and the lesson enforced is the misery arising from imprudent matrimonial connections. The lady turns out to be a vixen and a spendthrift; but before this discovery is made, the husband and wife have an amusing conference on the happiness of the married state.

'The Wyfe.—Sometyes they ryde into the countrey,
 Passynge the tyme wyth mirth and sporte;
 And when with their fryndes they have ben merye,
 Home to their owne house they do resorte.

The Husband.—Sometyes abroad they go to see playes,
 And other trym syghtes for to beholde;
 When often they meete in the hye wayes
 Muche of their acquaintance they knewe of olde.'

The husband soon finds the woful mistake he has committed, for he is set to the severest drudgery, and because he murmurs, we meet with the following stage directions:—'Here the wife must strike her husband handsomely about the shoulders with something'—'Here the wife must lay on load upon her husband'—and 'Here her husband must lie along on the ground, as though he were sore beaten and wounded'. The son returns to his father, who relieves his pecuniary wants, but is unable to rid him of his wife, under whose castigations he is supposed to be left to suffer, as an evil arising out of his own imprudence. The Devil seems to be brought in merely by way of agreeable variety, and to fill up an interval, while the

Student in Cambridge. Imprinted at London in Fletestrete, beneath the Conduit, by Thomas Colwell.' n. d. 4to, b. 1. A copy of this very rare drama is in the Collection at Bridgewater House.

son is on his way to his father: he enters with his usual exclamation, 'Ho, ho, ho!' often repeated; and is a very disinterested fiend, for he gives the younger part of the audience the following good advice:—

'Wherfore (my dere children) I warne ye all
Take hede, take hede, of my temptacion;
For commenly at the last ye have the fall,
And also brought to desperacion.
Oh! it is a folye for many to stryve,
And thynke of me to get the upper hande,
For unlesse that God make them to thryve,
They can not agaynst me sticke or stande.'

After a long speech by 'the Peroratour', containing an explanation of the moral purpose of the performance, comes the Epilogue, which may be taken as a sample of those appended to dramas of the time:—

[Here the rest of the Players come in, and kneele downe all together, eche of them sayinge one of these Verses.]

'And last of all, to make an ende,
O God! to the[e] we most humblye pray,
That to Queene Elizabeth thou do sende
Thy lyvely pathe [faith?], and perfect waye.

'Graunte her in health to raygne
With us many yeares most prosperouslye;
And after this lyfe for to attayne
The eternall blysse, joye, and felycytie.

'Our Bysshoppes, Pastoures, and Mynisters also,
The true understandyng of the worde,
Both nyghte and daye, nowe mercifully shewe,
That their lyfe and preachyng maye godly accorde.

'The Lordes of the Counsell and the Nobyltye,
Most heavenly Father, we thee desyre,
With grace, wisdom, and godly polycie,
Their hartes and myndes alwayes inspyre.

'And that we thy people, duelye consyderynge
 The power of our Queene and great auctorytie,
 May please thee, and serve her without faynyng,
 Lyvynge in peace, rest, and tranquilitytie.
 God save the Queene.'

*Jack Juggler*¹ resembles a Moral in having a character called the Vice, as *The Disobedient Child* has that popular personage, the devil, to bring it within the same class. The first is one of the oldest pieces in our language founded upon a classic original, the author professing, in his prologue, to have been indebted to 'Plautus' first comedy'.² From passages,

¹ The title is as follows:—'A new Enterlued for Chyldren to playe, named *Jacke Jugeler*, both wytte and very playsent. Newly Imprinted.' [The players names and a woodcut of Dame Coy, Boungrace, and Jack Juggler.] Colophon, 'Imprinted at London in Lothbury, by me Wyllyam Copland.' 4to, b. 1.

² Before the date when *Jacke Jugeler* probably was written, the *Andria* of Terence had been translated into English and acted: the fact that it was performed appears from the last stanza of the prologue, and the first of the epilogue.

'Of this matter shall ron all our comedy,
 Which playnlyer anon declaryd shalbe.—
 But I must go, I may no lenger tary;
 The players be come now, I do them se.
 Lo, this is Simo: it is tyme for me
 To go hens; therfore I pray you all here
 To gyve audyence unto the matter.'

The Epilogue, also spoken by 'the poete', opens thus:—

'Syth we have play'd now this lytill comedy
 Before your wisdoms, as we pretendyd,
 To take it in gre we besech you humbly,' etc.

The words, 'before your wisdoms', look as if the piece had been performed as a school or college exercise. It is without date and printer's name; but the type is like that of John Rastell. The prologue, in the earlier portion of it, praises Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate, and adds some

both in the prologue and epilogue, it is to be collected that the piece was written before the Reformation was completed :

‘ For higher things endite
In no wise he wold, for yet the time is so quesie,
That he that speaketh best is least thank worthie.’

interesting remarks on the improvement which had, even then, taken place in our language:—

‘ By these men our tong is amplyfyed so,
That we therin now translate as well as may,
As in eny other tongis other can do :
Yet the greke tong and laten, dyvers men say,
Have many wordys can not be englyshid this day :
So lyke wyse in englysh many wordys do habound
That no greke nor laten for them can be found.

‘ And the cause that our tong is so plenteouse now,
For we kepe our englysh continually,
And of other tongis many wordis we borow,
Which now for englysh we use and occupy.
These thingis have gyven corage gretly
To dyvers, and specyally now of late,
To them that this comedy have translate.’

So that it was the work of more than one hand. Where, and under what circumstances, it was performed, we have no account. The version in general is literal, but the following short extract will show that the translators adapted it, in some degree, to the manners of the time in which they lived : it is from act iv, scene 3.

‘ *Mysys.*—Good lord, is there any good properte sene
In any man remaynyng now continually?
For I thought Pamphilus to my mastres had bene
A man and a lovyng frend, ever redy.
But, god wot, this gere she takyth hevely,
For more sorow, I wene, then his love is worth
She doth take.—But lo, Davus comyth forth.—
What, man ! I the pray, what meanyth thys dede ?
And whither wilt [thou] now thys chyld bere ?

The author delivers himself more plainly upon this point in the epilogue :—

‘Such is the fashyon of the worlde now a dayes,
That the symple innosaints are deluded,
And an hundred thousand divers wayes
By suttie and craftye meanes shamefullie abused,
And by strength, force, and violence oft tymes compelled
To belive and saye the mounne is made of a grene chese,
Or els have great harme, and parcase their life lese.’

Davus.—Of thy quyk wit, Mysys, now have I nede,
And of thy sutteltie unto thys gere.

Mysys.—What purposyst ?

Davus.—Take this chyld of me here,
And quykly lay hym a fore our gatis round.

Mysys.—What ! I pray the, uppon the bare ground ?

Davus.—Off from the aulter some rushes take,
And straw them.

Mysys.—Why wilt not thou so do ?

Davus.—For if it happen that I must an oth make,
That I layd it not there, then may I, lo,
Clerely swere.

Mysys.—A ! now thy hole mynd I know.

Where dydyst all thys pope holynes fynd ?

Hence it will be perceived that the seven-line stanza is observed even in the dialogue between the characters. The epilogue again apologizes for the rudeness and imperfectness of the translation, notwithstanding ‘the englysh tong is now sufficient’. A hope is also expressed, that by this example others will be induced to make similar attempts, as the authors hold it best that, before Englishmen, plays should be in English.

Another dramatic piece (as far as a judgment can be formed from the appearance of the type) also from the press of John Rastell, indicates at this period the growth of a classic taste in England. Only a fragment of it is known, which was in the possession of Mr. Douce, and the whole of it is part of a scene between two characters called Philonides and Menippus. The page is divided into two columns, one being occupied by the Latin original, and the other by the translation. It appears to have formed part of a modern Latin play, possibly by Rightwise, master of St.

We may infer, therefore, that this interlude was written either in the reign of Edward VI or Mary, but not published until Elizabeth had been a few years on the throne. The printer has added no date, but it was entered on the Stationers' books in 1562; and, as none of William Copland's dated books came from his press after 1561, we may conclude, with tolerable certainty, that its appearance was not delayed beyond 1563. The story is by no means complicated, and there is a good deal of humour in the manner in which the few incidents are brought about.

Master Bongrace sends his lacquey, Jenkin Careaway, to his mistress Dame Coy, but Jenkin plays at dice, loiters and steals apples by the way. Jack Juggler, 'the Vice', without any apparent motive beyond the love of mischief, watches him, and dressing himself like Jenkin, determines to try to persuade Jenkin 'that he is not himself but another man'. He of course finds some difficulty in his undertaking, and among other arguments resorts to the forcible and in this case convincing one of blows: Jenkin is beaten out of his identity, and makes the following comic appeal upon the subject to the audience.

'But, maysters, yf you happen to see that other I,
As that you shall is not verye liklye,
Nor I woll not desyre you for him purposelye to looke,
For it is uncomparable unhappye hooke;
And if it be I, you might happin to seeke,
And not fynd me out in an hole weeke:
For when I was wonte to rune a waye
I used not to cum a gaine in lesse than a moneth or tway.

Paul's, and acted at Court by the children under his care. In the part that is left, Menippus is giving an amusing account of a journey he had made to hell.

Howbeit for all this, I thinke it be not I ;
 For to shew the matter in dyde, trulye,
 I never use to rune awaye in winter, nor in vere,
 But all wayes in suche tyme and season of the yeare
 When honye lyeth in the hyves of bees,
 And all maner frute falleth from the trees,
 As apples, nuttes, peres, and plummes also,
 Wherby a boye may live a brod a moneth or two.
 This cast do I use, I woll not with you fayne ;
 Therfore I wonder if he be I sertaine.
 But and if he be, and you mete me a brod by chaunce,
 Send me home to my maister with a vengauce.'

His blunders and confusion on this point get him into disgrace with Dame Coy, who bestows 'a cudgel blessing' upon him, and tells his master 'to joll his head to a post'. Even at the conclusion he has great difficulty in arriving at a conviction that he is himself, and not some other man. Besides the liveliness of great part of the dialogue, there is a decided attempt at character in the piece, as may be seen from the following description by Jack Juggler of Alice Trip-and-go, a smart maid-servant attendant upon Dame Coy.

'She simperith, she prankith, and jetteth with out fayle,
 As a pecoche that hath spred and sheweth hir gaye taile.
 She minceth, she brideleth, she swimmeth to and fro ;
 She tredith not one here a wrye, she tryppeth like a do :
 A brode in the strete, going or cumming homward,
 She quaverith and wardelith like one in a galliard. . . .
 She talketh, she chatteth like a pye all daye,
 And speaketh like a parat poppagaye ;
 And that as fine as a small silken threede,
 Ye, and as high as an eagle can fle for a neade.'

A very brief notice of Thomas Preston's *Cambyses, King of Persia*, and of *Appius and Virginia*, by R. B., will be

sufficient, as the former was reprinted by Hawkins,¹ and the latter is in the modern editions of *Dodsley's Old Plays*.² They are both productions of a similar construction, containing a mixture of history and allegory, and they were written nearly about the same date; in neither case clearly ascertained, but certainly early in the reign of Elizabeth. Of the two, *Appius and Virginia* deserves the preference, both for matter and style, although the compound strikes us in each as nearly equally absurd: perhaps in *Cambyzes* it is the more ridiculous, from the insertion of characters intended to heighten the comic effect of the piece, with the aid of Ambidexter the Vice. The author of *Cambyzes* does not seem himself to have known what to call his performance, but consistently with the discordant materials of which it is formed, he terms it on the title-page 'a lamentable Tragedy, mixed full of pleasant mirth'. For much the same reason, R. B. (the initials of the author of *Appius and Virginia*) calls his piece a 'tragical comedy':—he names his Vice Haphazard, who intermeddles in everything, and makes great efforts to be amusing. Conscience, Justice, Rumour, Comfort, Reward, and Doctrina, are the impersonations employed, chiefly to punish Appius and to console Virginius. There is not in it the least attempt at dramatic propriety and decorum: Virginia and her mother go to 'church', and Virginius, like a sound orthodox believer, explains the creation of man and woman according to the book of Genesis. The singularity of these pieces is, that (with the exception, perhaps, of *The Conflict of Conscience*) they are the earliest endeavours in Moral-plays to bring historical events and characters upon the stage.

We have reserved for this place a notice of a most curious dramatic relic, remarkable not merely on account of its extraordinary rarity, but because it is the only known specimen of

¹ *Origin of the English Drama*, i, 243.

² Vol. xii, p. 337.

the kind in our language. It is a fragment of a political Moral-play, consisting of twelve closely printed pages in 4to., the object of which seems to have been to illustrate and enforce the right rules of government for a State; and there is reason to suppose that *it was suppressed* immediately after its performance:¹ this circumstance will account for the fact that no other copy is known of any part of the interlude:² the portion preserved was recovered from the fly-leaves of an old book,

¹ In our *Annals of the Stage*, under date of Christmas 1558-9, (vol. i, p. 169), it is mentioned that a play was performed before the Queen of 'such matter that the players were commanded to leave off'. It is probable that *Albion Knight* was the very piece then interrupted, and that it had been prepared in order to give Elizabeth, in the very outset of her reign, a lesson upon government. Colwell, the printer, might think that five or six years afterwards there would be no objection to its publication.

² Mr. Douce had a single leaf of an interlude, which may possibly have been part of the same production; it is marked with the signature A iij, and the persons engaged in the dialogue are Humility, Temperance, and Disobedience, the last of whom wishes to pass by the name of Prosperity. Disobedience has just entered, and exclaims to two others who have been talking—

'Peas, whan I bydde you, and come whan I call:
I am royally provyded of lande and of fe,
Noble Disobedyence of might moost potencyall,
Yet wolde I be called by name due prosperyte,
Sholde I be obedyent to the superlatyfe degre?
Ne yet to no creature that lyveth in londe,
Sythe I am fre I wyll never be bonde.'

On a very slight provocation he strikes Temperance, and is reproved by Humility; on which he exclaims, in a different measure—

'What make ye in this countre?
Your warke is all in vanyte;
Ye can not prevayle.
Audacyte and Dysobedience,
With Adversytees presence,
[Th]us wyll we rayle.'

where it had been originally placed by the binder as waste paper. In the year 1565-6, Thomas Colwell entered on the Stationers' books for publication, 'A mery Playe bothe pythy and pleasaunt of Albyon Knight', which I apprehend is the very performance in question, of which a Knight named Albion (a personification of England) is the hero: the type of the fragment resembles that of Thomas Colwell, although, as it is without beginning or end, his name is not to be found upon it. It is a great curiosity.

Of how many characters, in its entire state, the piece consisted it is impossible to ascertain: those introduced in the course of the twelve pages extant¹ are the following:—Albion, a Knight; Justice; Injury (who seems to have been the Vice of the piece) and Division. Other personifications of Temporality, Spirituality, Principality, Commonalty, Sovereignty, Peace and Plenty, are mentioned, but do not appear in the fragment. In the commencement of it Injury, under

The following lines look as if the piece to which this leaf belongs had a political tendency—

'Humilite.—This tale to here it is a pyteous case.

God banyshe this vyce from this countre,
And restore obedyence in every place,
That every creature may knowe his degre:
And ever to dwell with Humylite.
Then grace wyll folowe vyce to eschewe,
And every man to his maister wolde be trewe.

Disobe.—That wyll they never, by swete Jesu.

Tempe.—I wolde from this place that thou wolde [go],
And remembre thy mysse that thou hast wrought,
For moche is the sorowe that thou hast do,
And all disobedyence thou hast in brought.'

The word within brackets is worn away in the original.

¹ Consisting of the outer fold of sheet B and the whole of sheet C. We should apprehend that it formed, perhaps, one-third of the complete production. It is in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire.

the assumed name of Manhood; endeavours to impose upon Justice, who is not easily persuaded that Injury is the person he pretends to be, and observes—

‘Thou spekest lyke a Lorell, full larg and full lewdly,
And not lyke a childe gotten of true matrymony;
And yet though thy person enduce no lykelyhode,
That in thee shuld be any manhode,
Yet, besyde that, thou seemest of manhode frayle,
Because so abused is thy lyght apparaile.’

Albion, who is also present, entertains at first considerable doubts upon the point, and Injury exclaims—

‘Now Chrystes benedycyte,
How Albion and Justyce hath forgot mee!
Because of mee they had no exercyse
Of long tyme by any enterpryse.
Wherfore, sithen ye can not know me by experience,
I wote not how ye shuld know me but by my credence:
Therefore, by my trouth and by my honestie,
Believe me for Manhode: trulie I am hee.

Albion.—Then, by your othe I am content
To have your frendshyp with good assent;
And, Justice, I pray you to do the same.

Justice.—Syr, if Manhod be hys name,
As he hath sworne, I wolde be glad
That hys frendshyp also I had.

Albion.—Then, Justyce, I pray you bothe,
Let me knyt you both upon hys othe.

[*And then he taketh both their handes together, saieng*
Now freindes I trust we be all three,
And with this knot I pray you contented to bee.’

We subsequently find Injury, while mistaken for Manhood, endeavouring to persuade Albion that wholesome Acts of Parliament are not enforced as they ought to be, but are

allowed to sleep, because they touch the Lords spiritual and temporal; so that, although passed to benefit merchants and the commonalty, they are declared by the great only 'fit to wipe a pan'. Albion is alarmed by these apparent truths, and it is easy to perceive how objectionable what follows might be to the Court and to the royal auditor—

Albion.—Alas! if this may not reformed bee,
I shall never be sure of prosperitie.

Injuri.—Ye[a], and what foloweth hereof, maister Albion?
To your person universall derysion.

Albion.—Why to me derysion?

Injuri.—For all other straunge nacions
They will raile on you with open proclamacions,
Saienge, whosoever do as he dose
Is halfe a man, and halfe a wyld goose.'

Justice is also alarmed, and both he and Albion quit the stage in great haste to treat with Principality, and to endeavour to pacify Commonalty, who appears to have been enraged at the existence of such gross abuses. After they are gone, Injury speaks a long soliloquy, in which he expresses his determination, with the aid of his 'olde mate called Dyvyssion', to counteract the proceedings of Justice and Albion, and to drive peace from the latter. We subsequently meet with the following stage-direction: 'Here Injury goeth out, and then Division commeth in with a byll, a sword, a buckler, and a dagger.' He sings a song expressive of his disposition, but of no great merit, until Injury returns, who is thus greeted—

Divisyon.—What, myne old freinde, Injury!
How were other hanged, and thou let go by?

Injury.—By god, because I tooke delaye,
For lacke of thee, to be myne atturneye.

Divisyon.—What, horson, woldest thou have mee
Be trussed up in stede of thee?

Injury.—Ye, by god, but even for a saye,
That I might lerne of you to know the playe.'

When they have grown serious, Injury informs Division that he is on good terms with Justice and Albion, and that he has 'turned the wrong side of his hood', in order to bring all to confusion. Division expresses his willingness to aid in the undertaking, and Injury asks how he will proceed? Division replies—

'I have two spyes of great exercyse;
The one is called Double Devyce:
Hym wyll I sende, I may tell thee,
Unto the Court to Pryncypalytye,
And hym wyll I charge, that wyth his provysion
Principalytye and the Comons to set at dyvysyon.
The second spye is called Olde Debate,
A synguler fellow with a ballyd pate;
Hym wyll I send to the lordes spirituall,
To cause them to wrangle with the lordes temporall.

Injuri.—What shall they use in their devise?

Division.—The one to Principalytie shall surmyse,
That the comons hartes do aryse
Against him; when that he doth aske,
In tyme of neede, our money for taske,
His harte to move with such unkyndnes.
Then the same spye shall use lyke doublenes,
And go to the comons, and to them tell
That Principalytie with equitie doth rebell,
More to hys lucre in everie deale
Applying his affection, then to the comenweale.
And how that he of neglygence
Doth not apply for theyr defence,

Neither by sea nor by londe,
 Neither by hye wayes, neither by stronde,
 But theves and raveners and murders eke,
 Dayly true men they pursue and seke :
 And that his lawes indifferently
 Be not used, but maintenaunce and brybary
 Is suffred alone without reformation,
 That the poore Comons is in altercation
 Of this matter, and wote not what to say,
 Bringing them in opinion that they ought not to pay
 To Pryncypalitie theyr duety of very desarte,
 Except lyke duetie be mynistred on hys parte.'

All this was speaking very home, and although it was put into the mouth of an evil character, it would be very easily liable to misinterpretation, independent of its disposing the minds of the people to consider whether there was not some truth in the complaints of Division. He proceeds to inform Injury that Old Debate is to be employed to sow dissension between the Lords spiritual and the Lords temporal, on the ground that the former were low-born upstarts, who ought not to be allowed to interfere in matters of government, and yet assumed to themselves the chief authority of the state. Injury, on his part, undertakes to prevent a marriage projected between Albion and Plenty, the daughter of Peace, which union is promoted by Justice. For this purpose the Vice desires Division to take the name of Policy, and to hasten to Albion in order 'to teche him a wrong cross row', and in order, as 'he loveth fair flesh of all meats', to advise him to recreate himself with Mirth and Prodigality,

'And take his owne good, while he maye,
 Lest all at last be brybid awaye;'

which are the last lines of the fragment. It is not difficult to conjecture, according to the usual course of pieces of this

class, that the author made his political Moral terminate in the defeat of the scheme of Injury and Division, and in the happy union of Albion and Plenty. From what is left of it we are well warranted in terming it a most remarkable production, without any parallel in English; and we cannot be surprised that, as appears in our *Annals of the Stage*, it was *stopped in the middle of the performance* at Court.

This division of our subject cannot, perhaps, be better illustrated than by the examination of a production, in which the separate natures of a moral and a romantic play appear to be mixed and united.

The 'pleasant comedy called *Common Conditions*' is a singular performance, and only one copy of it, and that imperfect, is known. As this fragment has neither beginning nor end it is not possible to ascertain when, and by whom, it was printed, but it may be conjectured that it was published about 1570. It comes very much within the general description given by Gosson of certain pieces in his time, consisting of 'the adventures of amorous knights passing from country to country for the love of their ladies.'¹

There are two pairs of lovers in the performance, who journey from Arabia to Phrygia, from thence to Thrace, to the supposed isle of Marofus, and back again to Phrygia; and the chief connexion between them is the character called Common Conditions; who is, in fact, the Vice of the performance, and at one time endeavours to promote, and at another to defeat, the happiness of all parties. He is at first the servant of Sedmond and his sister Clarisia (the offspring of Galiarbus, a banished nobleman), and afterwards of Lamphedon, son to the Duke of Phrygia, who is enamoured of Clarisia; but the Vice ultimately turns pirate. The names of the other pair of lovers are Nomides, an Arabian knight,

¹ *Plays Confuted in Five Actions*, Sig. C 6.

and Sabia, the daughter of a French physician; but the varied history of neither couple is concluded at the end of the fragment, though it is pretty clear that the author designed his piece to end happily.

The whole is, as usual, in rhyme, generally in lines of fourteen syllables, but occasionally much shorter; or rather, perhaps, with two words rhyming together, inserted in the middle of a long line, as in the following example:—

‘Lo heare deare dame, judge of the same as lightly as you maie.
I shall, sir knight, unto my might and simple skill here saie. . .’

The piece commences, as we have it in its imperfect state, with a scene between Shift, Drift, and Unthrift, three tinkers in Arabia, who sing, and afterwards rob Sedmond and his sister Clarisia. Conditions, the Vice, is attending upon them, and being captured, the thieves are about to hang him, when he offers to do the office for himself, if they will give him the halter, and let him ascend the tree. They consent, and when he is up he keeps them at bay with his knife, and calls so loudly for assistance, that they are glad to make their escape. This may be quoted as the best specimen of the humorous part of the performance:—

‘*Conditions*.—Ha! and there be no remedie, but that needs hang I must,

Give me the halter: Ile do it my self, and laie all care in the dust.
Unthrifte.¹—I am sure thou meanest not to hang without helpe of a friend.

Cond.—Is’t not as good to hang my self, as another hale the ende?

Unthrifte.—By gogs bloud, my maisters, an he will, we are all content,
For then in tyme for hanging hym we neede not repent.

Well, Drifte, give the halter unto the elf.

Cond.—Ha! was there ever little knave driven to hang hymself?—

Nay, I must also request your aide to helpe me into the tree.

¹ He is by a misprint called *Thrifte* in this part of the scene.

Shifte.—Naie, if you lacke any helpe, then hang us all three.

So lawe—now dispatche, and with spede make an ende.

Cond.—What to doe?

[*Speaking from the tree.*]

Drifte.—Marie, hang thyself.

Cond.—Naie, by your leave, that is more than I doe intende.

Unthrift.—Why, I am sure thou intendest not to serve us in such sort.

Cond.—Were not he mad would hang hymself to shewe three tinkers sport?

Shifte.—Why, I am sure to serve us so thou doest not intende.

Cond.—A mad foole he were would desperatly die, and never did offende.

Shifte.—By gogs bloud, Ile teare him doune, or els Ile lose my life.

Cond.—Backe againe, or Ile be so bolde as pare your nailes with my knife.'

The classical allusions in the serious dialogue are numerous, and the following, between Nomides and Sabia, each accusing the other sex of lightness and infidelity, shows that the author was a man of some little reading.

'*Nomides.*—Not wrongfully but rightfully I shall expresse your love ;
And therefore, ladie, heare my talke that I in breef shall speake,
And after, if you please, againe replie your minde to breake.
First, what love I praie you bare *Helena* unto her lorde and kyng?
What constancie in *Creseda* did rest in every thyng?
What love I praie you bare *Phedria* unto her *Theseus*,
When in his absence she desired his sonne *Hippolitus*?
What true love eke bare *Medea* unto Duke *Jason* he?
Tushe, ladie ! in vaine it is to talke, they all deceitfull be ;
And therefore, ladie, you must yeeld to me in that respect :
Men still are just, though women must their plighted vowes neglect. .

Sabia.—Then, Sir Knight, how faithfull was *Eneas* to *Didoes* grace?
How faithfull was Duke *Jason*, he whom *Medea* did aide,
To whom he plighted faithe by vowe none other to imbrace,
When he to winne the golden fleece by *Otes* was dismaide?

And *Theseus*, I praie you also, how faithfull did he bide,
When that the vowe he once had made to *Ariadne* he denide?
How faithfull was *Diomedes*, one of the Greekish crue?
Though *Troilus* therein was juste, yet was he founde untrue.
And so betweene these twaine and Fortunes lucklesse hap,
She was like lazer faine to sit, and beg with dishe and clap.
Tushe, tushe! you see to trust in men whose fickle braines are so,
That at the first sight of every wight their plighted voves forgo.'

The following sea-song, by pirates, is perhaps the oldest of the kind in English; and, if on this account only, it deserves quotation.

'Lustely, lustely, lustely let us saile forthe,
The winde trim doth serve us, it blowes from the north.

'All thinges we have ready and nothing we want,
To furnish our ship that rideth hereby;
Victals and weapons thei be nothing skant,
Like worthie mariners ourselves we will trie.

Lustely, lustely, etc.

'Her flagges be new trimmed set flanting alofte,
Our ship for swift swimmyng, oh, she doth excell:
Wee feare no enemies, we have escaped them ofte;
Of all ships that swimmeth she beareth the bell.

Lustely, lustely, etc.

'And here is a maister excelleth in skill,
And our maisters mate he is not to seeke;
And here is a boteswaine will do his good will,
And here is a ship boye we never had leeke.

Lustely, lustely, etc.

'If Fortune then faile not, and our next voiage prove,
Wee will returne merely, and make good cheare,
And holde all together as friends linkt in love;
The cannes shal be filled with wine ale and beere.

Lustely, lustely, etc.'

This song, and another by the Tinkers in the opening, with the proverbial burden,

‘Haie tiftie toftie Tinkers ! good fellowes they bee,
In stopping of one hole thei use to make three,’

are the best parts of the performance, judging from the fragment that is left of the latter song. The dialogues between the lovers are, nevertheless, conducted with extraordinary tediousness, and the language of the French Doctor Mountagos, father of Sabia, grotesquely absurd. A female idiot, called Lomia, is likewise introduced, clearly for the sake of variety, and to excite laughter at her imbecility.

The ‘pretty interlude called *Nice Wanton*’¹ ought not to be passed over, although it presents no very remarkable feature beyond the circumstance, that some of the principal characters are meant to represent persons, and are not merely symbolical abstractions. Xantipe is a foolish mother (of course a scold) who spoils two of her children, Ismael and Dalila, but treats her son Barnabas with great severity, and compels him to go to school, while his brother and sister play truant. The result is, that Barnabas is well educated and kept in good control, while the two others, as they grow up (which they do in the

¹ The title-page contains these explanatory verses:—

‘Wherein ye may see
Three braunc[h]es of an yll tree,
The mother and her chyldren three,
Twoo naught, and one godlye.

‘Early sharpe that wyll be thorne,
Soone yll that wyll be naught:
To be naught better unborne,
Better unfed than naughtely taught.’

At the bottom of the page is the date, Anno Domini MDLX; but the printer’s name is in the colophon: ‘Imprinted at London, in Paules Church yearde, at the Sygne of the Swane, by John Kyng.’

course of the short piece), abandon themselves to the highest crimes and grossest vices. They fall into the hands of Iniquity, the Vice, and he is a very able instructor to very apt scholars. Ismael, after losing all he has at dice, takes to the highway, commits a robbery, and is hanged in chains : Dalila becomes a prostitute, and after severe sufferings dies of the loathsome diseases to which, by her way of life, she had been exposed. Barnabas, on the contrary, lives in great credit, and in the end is highly rewarded for his virtues. Before she dies, Dalila crawls to her brother Barnabas, and he does not recognize her : the avowal of her name is prettily managed, where she says,

‘ To be restored to health, alas ! it is past,
Disease hath brought me into such decay ;
Helpe me with your almose while my life doth laste,
That, like a wretch as I am, I may go my way.

Barnabas.—Shewe me your name, sister, I you pray,
And I wyll helpe you now at your nede :
Both body and soule wyl I fede.

Dalila.—You have named me already, if I durst be so bold.
Your sister Dalila—that wretch I am.’

Ismael undergoes a regular trial before ‘ Daniel the Judge’ for his crimes, and the quest, or jury, deliver in their verdict, in consequence of which he is executed. Iniquity, the Vice, is carried off to be hanged at the same time, after a struggle and threatening to ‘ lay his brawling-iron’ on the face of any one who endeavours to secure him. Worldly-shame (the only strictly allegorical character in the piece, independent of the Vice), then torments Xantipe the mother, and she attempts, in despair, to stab herself, but is prevented by her son Barnabas, who ends the performance with a long discourse in favour of the education of children.

‘ A yonge plant ye may platte and bowe as ye wyll ;
When it groweth strong, there wyll it abyde styll.’

A marginal note informs us that 'he kneleth downe' while he delivers the prayer-epilogue for the Queen, nobility, and commonalty.

The 'pleasant and merry comedy *Tide tarrieth no Man*,' like some other productions of the same class, was intended to convey solid instruction in a popular form; the instruction, however, is certainly more obvious than the popularity: it is a mere allegory from beginning to end, and although one of the chief characters is a Vice, or jester, his part has little satire or merriment in it: he enforces the obvious moral that, in life, no time is to be lost, and that if it be lost, the loser is the sufferer. The Vice is named Courage, meaning that self-confidence which ought to accompany the common incidents of life, if they are to be carried to a successful termination. The name of the author was George Wapull, and we may more than suspect that he was a schoolmaster, and that the piece was written for the performance and benefit of his pupils. *Tide tarryeth no Man*, means that opportunity is never to be neglected, for if it be allowed to escape, it will never return: in our day, we should word the title '*Tide tarryeth for no man*', and so it has been mistakenly given in lists of our early theatrical productions. In order to enforce the Moral, and to carry it off cheerfully, songs in parts are intermixed, and the following is one of the best, given to three characters, Courage, Profit, and Furtherance.

'We have great gayne, with little payne,
And lightly spend it to :
We doe not toyle, nor yet we moyle,
As other pore folkes do.

We are winners all three,
And so will we be,
Where euer that we come a ;

For we know how
To bend and bow,
And what is to be done a.

‘To kneele and crouch, to fill the pouch,
We are full glad and fayne :
We euer still, euen at our will,
Are getters of great gayne.
We are winners, etc.

‘It is our will to poull and pill
All such as doe vs trust ;
We beare in hande good frendes to stand,
Though we be most uniust.
We are winners, etc.

‘Full far aboutes we know the routes
Of them that riches had ;
Whome through deceite, as fysh to bayte,
We made their thrift forth gad.
We are winners, etc.’

Considering who was the author, what might be his occupation, and for whose amusement the drama had been written, some portions of it may, perhaps, be considered rather free ; as, for instance, where the following lines are given to a young lady, who may be deemed the heroine of the performance :—

‘It doth me good to think the blisse
Which between new-married couples is :
To see their dalliance sometimes, I guesse,
It setteth my teeth on edge, I wisse.
Truly, I would give my best frocke,
And all thinges else unto my smocke,
To be marryed in the morn by vj of the clocke.
I shrew my heart, if that be a mocke.’

Although not very edifying, the piece seems to have en-

joyed great popularity, and to have been so much read, that only two copies have come down to our day; and one of those bears strong evidence of having been much thumbed and read: certain marks upon it lead us to suppose that it had been actually a prompter's copy: the exits and entrances are marked in manuscript, and the names of Harris, Simons, and Charles are given as those of three of the performers, possibly boys in the author's school: the whole may be pronounced rather dull, dry, and didactic, although enlivened by the young lady's matrimonial anticipations, and one or two other faint efforts at humour.

INTERLUDES.

THE PARDONER, FRIAR, CURATE AND NEIGHBOUR PRATT.—
THE FOUR P's.—JOHN, TIB, AND SIR JOHN.—PLAY OF
THE WEATHER.—WIT AND FOLLY.—GENTLENESS AND
NOBILITY.—THERSYTES.—ROBIN CONSCIENCE.—BEAUTY
AND GOOD PROPERTIES OF WOMEN.

JOHN HEYWOOD'S dramatic productions almost form a class by themselves: they are neither Miracle-plays nor Moral-plays, but what may be properly, and strictly, called *Interludes*; a species of writing of which he has a claim to be considered the inventor, although the term 'interlude' had been applied generally to theatrical productions as early as the reign of Edward IV.¹ Many of John Heywood's short and droll dramas are

¹ We have already had occasion to quote from the valuable MS. formerly in the possession of Mr. J. H. Bright, which contains various songs by John Heywood, that have never been printed. One of his contemporaries was a person of the name of Thomas Pridioxe or Prideaux, and we cannot refrain from here inserting a specimen of the writings of that hitherto utterly unknown poet, more especially as we suspect it to be the original ballad which gave the name of 'Queen Dido' to a very celebrated tune, often employed by the authors of songs in the reign of Elizabeth. Dido is supposed to sing the following ballad after she has been forsaken by Æneas:—

'Behowlde of pensyfnes the pycture here in place;
Beholde myne eyes whose teres do moyst my paled face.
Beholde myne eres denyde of there desyryd solas,
Beholde my playnts to fyll my mournyng hevy case.
I Dido, quene of Carthage cooste,
For Eneas love my life have lost.

properly *interludes*, and were represented in the interval of banquets, whether at Court or elsewhere: he himself usually performed in them.

The earliest of his pieces is, probably, *A mery Play betwene the Pardoner and the frere, the curate, and neybour Pratte*,¹ which was printed by William Rastell, in 1533, but which must have been written before 1521 (when the author

‘ My fame, my love, my sealfe I gave into his hand,
My kingdome and my welth at his owne heast did stand ;
Yet promis nor desartes cowlde binde his hart in troths band,
But fled, alas, fro me by nyght out of my land.
Forgettyng all respects of trothe,
He falste his honor and his othe.

‘ As the whyte swan dothe singe towards her dieng day,
And as the turtle tru her mone doth make alwaye,
So I pore Dido do my myseries here bewraye,
And with my death my dolefull desteny display.
O lawles love, no hearbe is fownd
To salve the sore where thow dost wound.

‘ O worthy women all, of hye and lowe degre,
A merror Dido make Eneas love to flee ;
Trust not men’s words, or teares, which most tymes deceiptfull be,
And ar, alas, the bayts that breeds our misserie.
Sufficeth for my love I die,
That you may live and learne thereby.

‘ O, rockie, ruthlesse harts, your owne with spite to spill !
O, curssed, crewell men, how can you worke such ill !
O dolfull deepe despaier, ringe out my carefull ends knill :
Welcome to me, sweete death, to me my grave is my wyll !
I came of earth, and wilbe thyne,
By trayne of hym whom I thought myne.

Finis. THOMAS PRIDIOXE.’

¹ This is the whole of the title, which is at the top of the first page: the colophon is this:—‘Imprynted by Wylyyam Rastell, the v day of Apryll, the yere of our lorde M.CCCCXXX.III.’ Small folio.

was a 'player on the virginals' in the Court of Henry VIII), because Leo X is spoken of in it as still living. This circumstance carries back Heywood's authorship to an earlier date than has yet been assigned to it. The plot is merely this:—A Pardoner and a Friar have each obtained leave of the Curate to use his church—the one for the exhibition of his relics, and the other for the delivery of a sermon, the object of both being the same—that of procuring money from the congregation. The Friar arrives first, and is about to commence his discourse, when the Pardoner enters and disturbs him: each is desirous of being heard, and after many vain attempts by force of lungs, they proceed to force of blows, kicking and cuffing each other unmercifully. The Curate, called by the unseemly disturbance in his church, endeavours, without avail, to part the combatants: he, therefore, summons neighbour Pratte to his assistance, and while the Curate seizes the Friar, Pratte undertakes to deal with the Pardoner, in order that they may set them both in the stocks. It turns out that the Friar and the Pardoner are too much for their assailants; and the latter, after a sound drubbing, are glad to come to a composition, by which the former are allowed quietly to depart.

In the course of the piece the tricks and impositions of both pardoners¹ and friars are exposed and ridiculed: after the Friar has dwelt for some time on the voluntary poverty of his order, he intimates that he is about to make a collec-

¹ In the 28 Henry VIII, a Proclamation was published against erroneous writings and books, and it contains a paragraph against 'dyvers and sundry light persons called Pardoners', and states, that 'the money unlawfully by them exacted of the poore innocent people, by colour of their indulgences, they spend in ribaldry and carnal vices, carrying about with them drabbes, hoores and cutte-purses, to the great slander of the realme, and the damage, deceit and impoverishing of the King's good lovinge subjects'.

tion, by sending round a plate or bag, while his whole sermon is directed against covetousness. The frauds of pardoners, as in Boccacio's famous novel, are satirised by the preposterous relics the Pardoner displays to excite devotion and obtain contributions. There is humour in the mode in which this is accomplished : the Pardoner says—

‘ And another holy relyke here may ye see,
 The great toe of the holy trynyte ;
 And who so ever ones doth it in his mouthe take,
 He shall never be dysseasyd with the tothe ake. . . .
 And here is of our Lady a relyke full good,
 Her bongrace, which she ware with her French hode,
 Whan she wente oute al wayes, for sonne bornynge. . . .
 Here is another relyke, eke a precyous one,
 Of all halowes the blessyd jaw bone,
 Which relyke, without any fayle,
 Agaynst poyson chefely doth prevayle.’

This exhibition of the great toe of the Trinity, of the bongrace and French hood of the Virgin (both parts of apparel worn at that day), and the jaw-bone of all the saints in the Calendar, were lively and laughable inventions, and shew how freely such matters were treated in the reign of Henry VIII.¹ The Friar, the Pardoner, and the Curate, deal in the most furious oaths, and Neighbour Pratte is the only decently spoken man of the party.

When Warton says of Heywood, that ‘his comedies are destitute of plot, humour or character’,² he certainly does not do him anything like justice, whether his productions be considered by themselves, or in connexion with the dull, dreary

¹ Heywood and his audience were so well pleased with two of these relics, the great toe and the jaw-bone, that he employed them upon similar service in his interlude of the *Four P's*.

² *Hist. Engl. Poet.*, iii, 372.

allegories by which they were preceded. As to plot, it must be recollected that none of them occupy much more than about the space allowed to a single act: they were only intended to fill merrily a short interval. The humour of the pieces can be judged of by a perusal of them, and there certainly is a great deal of broad fun in Heywood's 'play called *The Four P's*', which is reprinted in all the editions of *Dodsley*.¹ The story there, of the descent of the Pardoner to the infernal regions, of his interview with Lucifer, and of the joy of the devils at getting rid of the woman he came to deliver, are highly ludicrous. The question at issue, between the Palmer, the Pardoner, the Poticary, and the Pedlar, is, which shall tell the greatest lie? and the determination that the Palmer's simple assertion, that he never saw a woman out of patience in his life, is the most monstrous falsehood of all (which the other three, taken by surprise, involuntarily admit), gives an unexpected and very comic turn to the performance. *The Four P's* was printed by William Myddleton, without date, but no work with a date came from his press earlier than 1543, nor subsequent to 1547: it seems to have been written from twelve to perhaps fifteen years before it was published, as if waiting for a favourable opportunity. Warton made some great blunders regarding Heywood's productions, attributing to him *The Pinner of Wakefield*, which was written at least fifty years afterwards, and *Philotas*, 'ane verie excellent and delectable Treatise', printed in Scotland; and there recently reprinted. The dialogue, *Of Gentylnes and Nobyltye*, which in one place he assigns to Heywood, in another part of the same volume he gives to Rastell.²

The mery Play between Johan the husbande, Tyb his wife,

¹ Vol. i, p. 51, edit. 1825.

² Vide *Hist. Engl. Poet.*, vol. iii, pages 190 and 373, edit. 8vo.

and *Syr Jhan the preest*,¹ certainly deserves the epithet applied to it on the title-page: it is 'a merry play', resembling in its structure and composition a one-act farce. Johan is a hen-pecked husband, who, in the absence of his wife, pretends to be complete master at home; and as she is out of the way at the commencement of the performance, he threatens vehemently to beat her on her return. She unexpectedly enters, overhears him, and demands whom he intends to beat?

Johan.—Who, I, Tyb? None, so God me save.

Tyb.—Yes: I harde thee say thou woldest one bete.

Johan.—Mary, wife, it was stokfysse in Temmes-strete,
Which wyll be good meate agaynst lente.'

Tyb complains of sickness, which Johan attributes to her having been, as usual, drinking with Sir Jhan the priest: she afterwards tells him that she, her gossip Margery, a neighbour's daughter, and Sir Jhan, had made a pie, which she produces, having brought it home with her. Johan is ordered out to invite the priest to supper, and he is not without violent suspicions that his wife has been playing him false with Sir Jhan: he is obliged, however, to obey; and when the priest arrives, Johan is sent for water, under pretence that they are desirous of washing their hands before they begin upon the pie. While he is gone, it is rendered pretty clear on what sort of terms Tyb and Sir Jhan stand with respect to each other, and they laugh heartily at the 'mocks, fables and nyfys' which the poor husband had been made to believe. Johan returns, having found that the pail would not hold water: he is supplied with wax to mend it, and while he is thus busily employed, Tyb and the Priest eat up the whole of the pie, without attending to the poor husband's remon-

¹ Colophon:—'Imprynted by Wyllyam Rastell the xii day of February, the yere of our Lord MCCCC and xxxij. *Cum privilegio.*' Folio.

strances, and he not daring to maintain his right to a share of it. At last Johan is out of patience, and throws down the pail in a passion, upon which Tyb and her priestly paramour fall upon him, and after making the blood 'ronne about his crys' they quit the scene together. Johan fancies that he has compelled them to escape, but it rather suddenly comes into his head that they have gone out 'to make him a cokwolde': he therefore follows them with speed 'to se yf they do him any vylany', and so the piece ends.

Faulty as this production may be in many respects, it has surely more 'plot, humour and character', and has more resemblance to real life, than nearly all that went before it, and a great deal that came after it.

In another of Heywood's dramatic productions he had a very different object in view than the mere amusement of the spectators: it was written to enforce and illustrate a point of natural philosophy, and under the name of Jupiter to vindicate Providence in the course and distribution of the seasons. It is called *The Play of the Weather*, and it was printed in 1533.¹ The conduct of the piece is this:—Phœbus, Saturn, Æolus and Phœbe, complain to Jupiter that whatever is done by the one is counteracted by the other: thus the frost of Saturn is melted by the rays of Phœbus; the rain, occasioned by Phœbe, destroys both heat and frost, while Æolus 'suffereth neyther sone-shyne, rayne, nor snow'. All three are therefore equally incensed; and appeal being made to Jupiter, he summons before him persons of every class, in order that they may state their wishes and grievances on the subject of the weather. This summons is conveyed by Merry Report, 'the Vice', a character introduced, at least by name,

¹ With this title: '*The Play of the Wether*. A new and a very mery enterlude of all maner of Wethers: made by John Heywood, 1533.' Folio, B. I.

into no other production by Heywood. The Gentleman, the Merchant, the Ranger, the Water-Miller, the Wind-miller, the Gentlewoman and the Launder, all require different kinds of weather, according to their several trades and employments: to these is added 'a boy, the best that can play', who wishes for frost and snow, that he may catch birds and make snow-balls. Jupiter, unable to satisfy all at the same time, undertakes to comply with their several requests in turn, according to the seasons; and he afterwards, in the following rather absolute manner, endeavours to show them the justice and policy of his decision.

'Now, on the tother syde, yf we had graunted
The full of some one sewt and no mo,
And from all the rest the wether had forbyd,
Yet who so hadde obtayned had wonne his owne wo :
There is no one craft that can preserve man so,
But by other craftes, of necessitye,
He muste have myche parte of his commodyte.

'All to serve at ones, and one destroy a nother,
Or ellys to serve one and destroy all the rest,
Nother wyll we do the one nor the tother,
But serve as many or as few as we thynke best ;
And where, or what tyme to serve moste or lest,
The dyreccyon of that, doutles, shall stande
Perpetually in the power of our hande.

'Wherefore we wyll the hole worlde to attende
Eche sort on suche wether as for them doth fall ;
Now one, now other, as lyketh us to sende :
Who that hath yt ply it, and suer we shall
So gyde the wether in course to you all,
That eche wyth other ye shall hole remayne
In pleasure and plentyfull welth certayne.'

With this decree all profess themselves contented, and the performance ends. If this production be not so laughable as others by the same author, it evinces a thoughtful and philosophic turn of mind, and makes up for the want of mirth by abundance of useful instruction. It was probably written and contrived by Heywood for a Court show, and, if not too long, was instructive as well as amusing.

He may also perhaps deserve credit, as the inventor of another species of dramatic entertainment—though dramatic chiefly in the circumstances, that it was conducted in dialogue, and that it was recited in public: it has no story whatever, and is merely a discussion in verse between two or more characters on some particular topic or opinion.¹ Productions of this kind could never be popular, and it is therefore not surprising that only one of them by Heywood should have descended to us, and that in manuscript. It is in the British Museum, and the point there disputed and argued between John, James and Jerome (the latter acting as a sort of moderator), is whether a fool or a wise man be the happier? and it is singular that William Somer or Summer, the fool of Henry VIII, is often introduced, as an illustration of the advantage of being without understanding and education. The MS. does not seem complete at the beginning, but very little of it can have been lost, beyond the mere introduction showing how the discussion commenced. The whole is in the handwriting of the author, who adopted a peculiar mode of spelling, often more uncouth than that of the age in which he lived: from the conclusion it is apparent that the piece had been recited before the King. The

¹ A performance of this kind is mentioned by Hall, in his *Chronicle* (Ann. 18 Henry VIII), as having taken place before the King and Court: he says, 'these two persones plaied a dialog, the effect wherof was whether riches were better than love.'

following will be a sufficient specimen of the manner in which the argument is maintained on both sides. John remarks,

‘I graunt to agre, as ye have defynde,
That labor of body and labor of mynde,
That labor or payne of mynde ys the greter :
And this now grawntyd, what be ye the better ?

James.—So muche the better, and yow so muche the wurs,
That ye may now put yowr toonge in yowr purs,
For any woorde in defens yowr toong shall tell.
After thes my next woordes gyve eare and marke well.
This labor of myndd, whyche we now agre
Above labor of body, we must decre
To joyne foole to the wytty, for possyibly
Cannot the wyttles take parte of that payne.

John.—Why ?

James.—How can he have payne by imagynacyon,
That lackythe all kynds of consyderacyon,
And yn all sencys ys so ynsoffycient,
That nowght can he thinke in owght yt may be ment ? . .
Thys cawse with wyttles payne of mynde dyspensys ;
But the wytty havynge all vytall sensys
Hath therby an inwarde clocke, whyche marke who wyll,
May oftymes go false, but yt never standythe styll ;
The plummets of that clocke come never to grownde :
Imagynacyon ys watche and gothe so rownde ;
To whyche consyderacyon gyvyt he so quycke eare,
That in the wytty mynde the restles rest ys there.
A small wytte may ges, no wone [one] wytte can deme
How many, or how muche ar there paynes extreme,
Nor how many contrary kyndes in some one brest.
Yf ye perceyve this tale ye se yt wytnest
Thre thyngs, of whyche the fyrst ys, that the wyttles
Of labor or payne of mynde have reles [release] :
The seconde ys, that the wytty have in ure
All paynes of mynde, and that wytt doth that procure :

Thyrdly I glanset at payne of mynde, alewdyng
That payne to be most payne. As in for conclewdyng,
Perceyve ye this?

John.—Ye, and grawnt yt trew, to.

James.—Then must ye grawnt wytty to have most payne.

John.—So I do.

James.—Yf wytty have most payne of tweyne, ye must say
Better to be wyttles then wytty.

John.—Nay.

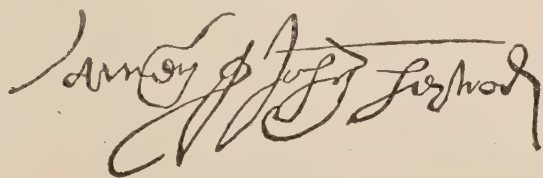
James.—I say yes.

John.—I say nay, and wyll so envey,
That I wyll holde your wagger another way.
As I grawnt wytty of twayne most payne endewre,
So wyll I prove wytty to have most plesewre ;
Whyche plesewre shall drowne the wyttiest payne,
And the plesewer yn whyche the wyttles remayne.'

Thus they dispute the obscure matter until Jerome inter-
poses; and just before the close of the dialogue, which would
occupy about three-quarters of an hour, James acknowledges
himself in the wrong, and that he would rather be

'Sage Salomen then sot Somer, I assewre ye.'

It terminates with four stanzas by way of epilogue, which 'in
the Kyng's absens are voyde', and which extravagantly laud
the wit of his Majesty. 'Amen qd John Heywod' is thus
written at the end, to attest the authorship:



Another production of a similar description, but without
the subtlety and acuteness displayed by Heywood, was

printed by John Rastell, who was perhaps its author, as at the end is the ambiguous colophon, '*Johannes Rastell me fieri fecit*'. It has been assigned to Heywood,¹ but throughout there is no trace of his hand: it is without date, but a passage in the second part would indicate that, if Rastell were its author, it was not produced until after his recorded conversion from Popery by Frith.² Warton, in one place (*Hist. Eng. Poet.*, iii, 190), without hesitation, ascribes it to Rastell, to whom he also gives another interlude, which we shall notice presently, with the colophon *Johannes Rastell me imprimi fecit*, an expression, however, that includes no claim of authorship. The title of the 'Dialogue' of which Rastell may have been the author, is the following—'Of gentylnes and nobylte. A dialoge between the Marchaunt, the Knyght, and the Plowman, dysputyng who is a verey Gentylman, and who is a Noble man, and how men shuld come to auctoryte; compild in maner of an enterlude, with divers toys and gestis addyd therto to make mery pastyme and disport.' A copy of this production, which is a small folio, was formerly in the Garrick Collection, as appears by the MS. Catalogue, which accompanied the plays to the British Museum, but it is not now to be found. It is in two parts, both of considerable length, and the discussion is tediously conducted by the Merchant, the Knight, and the Ploughman, the latter, from first to last, not only having the best of the argument, but inflicting upon his antagonists two sound floggings with a short whip with which he was furnished: the stage-direction, *Et hic verberat eos*, occurs in each part, the Merchant and the Knight taking the castigation patiently. The second part relates chiefly to the reasonableness of the law of inheritance, and the Ploughman quotes Latin to the conviction of his

¹ *British Bibliographer*, iv, 270.

² Dibdin's *Typ. Ant.*, iii, 82.

adversaries, who abandon the field in his favour; but return when he has gone out, and in his absence settle the matter their own way. The 'divers toys and gestis' seem chiefly the beatings which the Ploughman bestows; and without going into the serious portion of the dialogue, we may give a short specimen, from the second part, of the manner in which one of these practical jokes is introduced.

Knyght.—By goggis swet bodi, thou art a stark knave,
Noble men and gentylmen so to deprave.

Plow[man].—What, thou proud horeson fole, whom dost thou knave?
I trow, thou woldist a good blowe or two have
Wyth a good whypstoke to tech the[e] curtesy.

Knyght.—Avant, beggerly knave: I the defye.

Plow.—What! wylt thou wage battell by and by, now?
That shall I prove strayght, I make God avowe.

[*Et hic verberat eos.*]

March[ant].—Kepe the peace, masters: hold your handys for shame.
To make this besynes ye be gretely to blame.
Ye wyll dysturb all thys hole company.

Plow.—Nay, mary, it is a cause to make them mery:
To walke such a proude foole is but sport and game.

Knyght.—By cokkys body, were not for worldly shame,
I shuld cut thy fleshe, or elles see thy herte blode.

March.—Sir, hold your tong: your wordis be nothing good.
We lose here, with thys lewyd altercacyon,
Mych good pastyme and recreacyon.

Plow.—Why, what better pastyme here canst thou have,
Then to here one to call an other knave,
And see such a proud foole walkyd with a whyp?

March.—But I love it not: therfore, of felyshyp,
Leve thys brablyng, and with good argument
Trye the matter: that is most convenyent.'

The epilogue, consisting of eleven stanzas, is spoken by a

person called 'the Philosopher', who thus finally and soberly settles the matter in difference.

'Yet I thynke now, under your correccyons,
The thyng that makyth a gentylman to be
Ys but vertew and gentyll condycyons ;
Whych as well in pore men oft tymys we se,
As in men of grete byrth or hye degre ;
And also vycious and churlyssh condycyons
May be in men born to grete possessyons. . . .
So vertue is ever the thyng pryncypall,
That gentylnes and noblenes doth insue ;
Then these hedys, rulers, and governours all
Shuld come therto be cause of theyr vertue ;
And in auctoryte they ought not contynue,
Except they be good men, dyscrete and wyse,
And have a love and zele unto justyce.'

This speech is made to the 'Soferayns' present, which was a usual mode of addressing audiences in our older dramas, as if at least they were all noble ; but there is nothing to indicate that this dialogue, like the last by Heywood, was recited before the King.

An anonymous interlude, of a different character, written as early as 1537, though not printed until many years afterwards, and the hero of which is named Thersites, deserves especial remark,¹ as perhaps the oldest dramatic performance extant,

¹ Mr. Haslewood, who gave an account of this piece in the *British Bibliographer*, i, 172, hastily concluded that it 'takes precedence of the earliest specimen yet known, of an interlude unconnected with scriptural history.' Most of Heywood's Interludes were printed in 1533, four years before *Thersytes* was performed, according to the date which Mr. Haslewood himself has pointed out, from the circumstance of Prince Edward and his mother being prayed for in the Epilogue. Besides, all the Moral-plays written and represented, from the reign of Henry VI downwards, were 'unconnected with scriptural history.' The title is as

in which a historical character (independent of Scripture personages) is introduced; although the events in which he is engaged are mere ridiculous burlesque, and have no connection whatever with history. Thersites enters as just returned from the siege of Troy, but nearly all the allusions and illustrations are from the times and country of the author: the hero talks of Cotswold-hills, of Wales, Kent, King Arthur, and his knights of the round table, and expresses his resolution to walk through London in spite of all opposition from the civic authorities. The plot (if such it may be called) is simple; and quite as much absurdity, for the sake of raising laughter, has been introduced, as could well be brought into so small a compass. It appears, that Thersites, having lost his armour at the siege of Troy, applies to Mulciber to forge him a new suit; and a colloquy of equivoque, possibly the oldest on our stage, takes place between them on the word 'sallet', by which Thersites means a helmet, and Vulcan perseveres in understanding a salad:

Thersites.—Nowe, I pray to Jupiter that thou dye a cuckolde.

I meane a sallet with whiche men do fyght.

Mulciber.—It is a small tastinge of a mannes mighte

That he shoulde for any matter

Fyght with a fewe herbes in a platter.

No greate laude shoulde folowe that victorie.

follows:—'A new Enterlude called *Thersytes*. Thys Enterlude folowynge dothe declare how that the greatest boesters are not the greatest doers'; and the colophon is this:—'Imprinted at London, by John Tysdale, and are to be solde at hys shop in the upper ende of Lombarde strete in Alhallowes church yarde, neare untoo grace church,' 4to. b. l. It has no date, but Tysdale printed between 1550 and 1563. Kirkman included it in his list of plays at the end of his reprint of *Tom Tyler and his Wife*, 1661, which is the earliest notice of its existence; but no copy of *Thersytes* came to light until it was reprinted some years ago.

Thersites.—Goddess passion, Mulciber, where is thy wit and memory?
I wolde have a sallet made of stele.

Mulciber.—Whye, syr, in youre stomacke longe you shall it fele,
For stele is harde for to digest.'

This dialogue, and more of the same sort before Vulcan can be made to comprehend, occurs in the smithy; for the stage-direction says, that the Smith 'must have a shop made in the place'. After Thersites is also furnished with an habergeon, he exclaims—

'Now have at the lyons on cotsolde !¹

I wyll neyther spare nor for heate nor for colde.

Where art thou, King Arthur, and the knightes of the round table?'

of whom he enumerates 'Gawyn the curtesse', 'Cay the crabbed', 'Lancelot of the Lake', etc. He dares them to the fight, and is provided with a sword that will pare iron. His mother, deceived by his boasting, in vain endeavours to pacify him and to moderate his savage fury, to which, among other things, he replies, by the following blundering reference to Robinhood and Little John, with whom he declares he wishes to contend.

'Where is Robin, John, and little hode?

Approche hyther quickly, if ye thinke it good :

I wyll teache suche outlawes, with Chrystes curses,

How they take hereafter awaye abbotes purses.'

The confusion in the first line, supposed to be occasioned by the recklessness of rage, is pleasantly imagined. Thersites subsequently mentions Friar Tuck, in the course of a contest between him and a snail, which, after some fearful deliberation, he attacks with club and sword, and which is finally compelled to draw in its horns. A new personage then enters, called 'Miles, a knyght', in the *dramatis personæ*,

¹ Cotswold lions are still proverbially sheep.

and in the scene 'a pore soldiour come of late from Calice', from whom Thersites precipitately makes his escape to his mother. Telemachus, a child troubled with worms, arrives with a letter from Ulysses to the mother of Thersites, soliciting a remedy: a charm is subsequently given for the cure of Telemachus, but it is difficult now to understand the humour of this part of the piece, which perhaps had some temporary application. The conclusion (independent of the epilogue) is the re-entrance of Miles, from whom Thersites again flies, leaving his club and sword as trophies for his antagonist.

This piece may be looked upon partly as an imitation, and partly as an improvement upon Heywood, the improvement relating not to language, nor indeed to construction, farther than as this sort of farce makes an approach, however distant, to a better species of composition.

We have been fortunate enough to obtain a considerable fragment of an interlude, of which some indistinct and incorrect notices are found in lists of dramatic performances. The title given to it, and perhaps the correct one, is *Robin Conscience*; and it seems to have consisted of three dialogues between the hero, the representative of Conscience in the human mind, his father, who is a personification of Covetousness, his mother called New-guise, and his sister named Proud-beauty. It was, in fact, a moral lecture against avarice, novelty and vanity, conducted dramatically; but it is a matter of doubt, judging from the extant specimen, whether it ever was acted, or was intended by the author for representation. Whenever it has been spoken of, however, it has been called 'an interlude', and on this account, as well as from the extreme rarity of the piece (no part of which appears to have been seen for the last one hundred and fifty years), we shall give a few brief quotations from the portion in our hands, which is the part of the discussion between Robin Conscience

and his father Covetousness, who is represented as a rich farmer, desirous of engrossing into his own hands all the property of his neighbours.

As to the date when it was printed, nothing can be decided with certainty. The '*second book* of Robyn Conscience' seems to have been entered with the Stationers' Company on August 3d, 1579; but I apprehend that the first book, that of which a fragment has been recovered, is considerably older: it was probably written soon after the Reformation, as Covetousness is a Roman Catholic, and calls his son Robin (who gives him such good advice), 'a heretic', which was then still deemed an opprobrious term. Both the authorship and the printing may have been very early in the reign of Elizabeth, if not that of Edward VI. If it appeared in the latter reign, its rarity may be accounted for, by supposing it one of the pieces forbidden or destroyed in the time of Mary, because it favoured what was called 'the new doctrine'. That it was never performed we infer, not merely from the general turn and tone of the dialogue, but from the form of the stanzas, each of which ends with a set burden, which in recitation would have been wearisomely monotonous. Robin Conscience has been arguing against the wickedness of extortion and the folly of ambition, and Covetousness thus replies:—

Father.—What Robin, my thynke, thou hast lytle wyt:
Doest thou thinke skorne, to come to promocion?
For to marye with gentilles, I trow, it is fyt,
Havyng with them of moneye a good porcion:
What though it be gotten by crafte or extorcion,
By the masse, it is all my delyght and pleasor
To have here aboundaunce of worldly treasure.

Robin.—By extorcion, father? mary, God it forfende,
That any Christen man therein should delight;
Father, geve me no stollen goodes my welth to amende,

Onles I do live by the poore mans ryght,
As I feare that some doth, both Lord and knyght,
Wherfore, good father, in time here repent,
And have a respecte unto Christes testament.

Father.—Ah Robin ! I perceve nowe, so God me save,
That thou wyltbe but a meane gentilman,
Seyng you be suche a concinable knave.
Go seke thou thy livinge where that thou can.
Tusshe, what care I, though the people me ban !
By the masse, it is all my delight and pleasor
To have here a boundance of worldly treasure.'

Robin warns his father against Mammon and the seven deadly sins ; but Covetousness replies, that if he followed this advice or the gospel, he might ' chance to lie in his hood' without the means of support. The son proceeds—

' *Robin.*—Father, you have ynough, yf you have not to muche.
This I dare be bolde here to a vowe,
Youhaveten tymes more grounde, and money in your hutch,
Then ever had my granse, you wyll this alowe ;
Yet he kep a better house than, than ever dyd you.
Wherfore, good father, amende and repent,
And have a respecte unto Chrystes testament.

Father.—Tusshe, Robin ! thy talke is folyshe and fonde.
I knowe thy mynde, what thou goest about :
Thou woldest have me to live only by my londe,
And to kepe open house for every jacke lout.
No, I wyll feaste none bnt the roufflinge rout ;
For it is all my delyght and pleasor
To have here abundaunce of worldely treasure.

Robin.—Father, I wolde have you live, so that god mai be pleased,
And for your good life God will geve you mede.
Father, spende your goodes so that the poore may be eased,

For youre riches be lent you to do suche as nede,
 And not to spende all on the riche, for they have no nede;
 Wher fore, good father, in tyme yet repent,
 And have a respecte unto Christes testament.

Father.—Be the masse, Robin, I thinke thou arte made.
 Shulde I feast beggers? mary, fye for shame!
 I dar say it wolde make some gentell man sadde,
 That all riche men shulde have such a name:
 Yea, I my selfe wyll confesse the same,
 Seynge it is all my delyght and plesore
 To have abundaunce of worldely treasure.'

After the son has argued the point in a very orthodox manner, citing the Scripture and relying upon the prophets, the father gets quite out of patience, and thus exclaims—

Father.—What, guppe, Robin! guppe boy! guppe hereticke and fole!

Now goddes dere curse I geve the and mine.
 Mary, syr, ye have gone to longe to scoole
 A gaynst my ryches and welth to repyne;
 By the masse, yf thou to the scripture incline,
 Be sure that I wyll never do the pleasor,
 Nor yet never helpe the, with none of my treasure.

Robin.—O father! father, yet arise up and wake
 Out of thys slepe of cursed covetous snare,
 God wyllynge, I wyll never Gode's worde forsake,
 Nether for you, nor worldlye welfare.
 Good father, now leave your carpe and care,
 For you have ynough, wherfore be content,
 Onles you be dampned at the daye of iudgement.

Father.—What dampned, Robin! mary, that were a toye.
 Tusshe! a dewe, farwell, for I must departe.
 Ah, Robin, Robin, thou art a shroud boy,
 For thy wordes pearceth me even to the hart:
 Well, yet I wyll go walke downe unto my cart,

For nothyng, Robin, but for my pleasor.

Oh, howe my hart is styll upon worldlye treasure !

Robin.—Repent, father, repent, for your goodes is your God :

Repent, or els you be for ever in a dampnable case.

Be ware, father, for our Lorde wyll stryke wyth his rod,

God knoweth how, or in what time or space.

Father, God wyllynge, I wyll home to your place,

To counsell my mother also to repent ;

For bothe of you be neye voyde of all grace,

Wherefore applye you in tyme to be penytente.'

We are only left to guess at the result of Robin's 'godly admonition' to his father, who begins to exhibit symptoms of repentance ; and this part of the 'interlude' is closed by the words '*Finis. Here endeth Robin and his Father.*' With this specimen before us, there is not much to regret in the loss of the remainder of this biblical curiosity, as a literary and dramatic relic.¹

We cannot better conclude this part of the subject, and enter upon the immediate rise of Tragedy and Comedy among us, than by a brief review of a dramatic production belonging to the class of interludes, which, at a later date, seems actually to have furnished the materials for a play of greater length and probably more variety. We know that it was very early the practice to revive elder pieces with improvements and additions ; and such, we apprehend, was the case with a very scarce drama on *The beauty and good properties of women, as their vices and evil conditions*,² which Warton, merely on the

¹ It is in the dramatic collection of the Duke of Devonshire, to whom we are indebted for the use of it.

² The title at length is the following :—'A new comodye in englyshe, in maner of an enterlude, ryght elygant and full of craft of rhetoryk, wherein is shewd and dyscrybyd, as well the bewte and good propertes of women, as theyr vycys and evyll condicions, with a morall conclusion and exhortacyon to vertew': folio.

strength of the colophon, *Johes Rastell me imprimi fecit*, has assigned to that printer as its author.¹ It was published about 1530, but as late as 1580 we have a notice of its performance in the following quotation from a puritanical tract called *A second and third Blast of Retrait from Plaies and Theaters*, printed in that year: 'The nature of their comedies are for the most part after one manner of nature; like the tragical-comedy of Calistus, wherein the baudress, Scelestina, inflamed the maiden Melibea with her sorceries.' Such is precisely the subject of the interlude under review, the hero of which is called Calisto, the heroine Melibea, and a procuress Celestina.² On its revival, with additions and improvements, shortly prior to 1580, the hero's name was probably changed to Calistus, and that of the bawd to Scelestina, as it ought of course properly to be spelt.

The story is simply this:—Calisto, a gay young man, is in love with Melibea, the daughter of Danio, but she dislikes him. By the advice of a parasite, called Sempronio, he engages on his side, by gifts, old Celestina, who keeps a common brothel. She endeavours to draw the heroine into her house, that she may meet Calisto, but failing, pretends that he has a dreadful fit of the tooth-ache, which cannot be cured without the loan of the relic-hallowed girdle of Melibea, aided by the maiden's prayers. Melibea, thus importuned, consents to lend her girdle (which seems to be taken figuratively for a much less innocent concession), and immediately after she has given it, she repents her rashness, confesses her fault to her father, puts up prayers to heaven for assistance

¹ *Hist. Eng. Poet.*, iii, 191.

² It was very early the subject of a play in Spanish. It was finally extended in that language to twenty-one *Jornadas* or Acts, and was translated into English by Thomas Mabbe in 1631, folio.

and forgiveness, and the performance ends with a moralization, and warning to old and young, by Danio.

This plot, we see, has no connexion with allegory; but, at the same time, it is not long enough for a play, and could only have been acted as an interlude: as a serious production, therefore, it holds precisely the same place in our drama, which those of John Heywood fill as comic performances. We are without any other specimen of the kind; and as nothing more than the bare title of the piece has ever been given (and even that incorrectly by Warton), a few characteristic extracts are necessary. Calisto, in despair of gaining the love of Melibea (who confesses in the opening that she has no sufficient reason for disliking him), calls for his lute, that he may endeavour to sing away his melancholy; but he is unable to tune it, and breaks out very naturally,

‘Thys lute is out of tune now, as I ges.

Alas! in tune how shuld I set it,

When all armony to me discordeth yche whyt?’

Of age, he says elsewhere strikingly:—

‘And age is the hospytal of all maner sykenes,
The restyng place of all thought unrelevyd,
The sporte of tyme, past the ende of all quicknes,
Neybour to deth, a dry stok without swetnes.
Discomforte, disease, all age alowith;
A tre without sap, that small charge boweth.’

Without much dramatic propriety, perhaps, the best speech in the whole piece is given to the old procuress Celestina, when she is endeavouring to excite the compassion of Melibea for Calisto.

‘Full well, and graciously the case ye consyder;
For I never belevyd, that god in vayn
Wold gyff you such countenance and bewte to gedyr,
But charyte therwith to releve folk in payn:

And as god hath gyffyn you, so gyff hym agayn ;
 For folks be not made for them self onely,
 For then they shuld lyff lyke bests all rudely ;
 Among whych bests, yet some be pyteful.
 The unicorne humblyth hym self to a mayd,
 And a dog in all his power yrefull,
 Let a man fall to ground, his anger is delayd :
 Thus by nature pyte is conveyd.
 The kok, when he skrapith and happith mete to fynd,
 Calleth for his henns ; lo ! se the gentyll kynde.
 Shuld humayn creaturys, than, be of cruelnes ?
 Shuld not they to theyre neybour shew charyte ?
 And specyally to them wrappyd in sekenes,
 Than they that may hele theym cause the infirmyte.'

Afterwards, she advances nearer, and speaks more plainly
 of Calisto, and with equal force.

'By god, and by my soule, in him is no malyncoly.
 With grace indewid, in freedome as Alexandre,
 In strength as Hectour, in countenance mery,
 Gracious ; envy in hym reynynd never.
 Of noble blod, as thou knowst ; and yf ye ever
 Saw him armyd, he semeth a seynt George,
 Rather than to be made in naturs forge.
 An angell thou woldist judge him, I make avow.
 The gentyll Narciso was never so fayre,
 That was enamoryd on his own shadow.
 Wherefore, fayre mayde, let thy pyte repayre :
 Let mercy be thy mother, and thou her heyre.
 This knyght, whom I com for, never seasyth,
 But cryeth out of payn, that styll encresyth.'

In contrast with these passages, the following satirical and
 highly-coloured attack by Sempronio, the parasite, on women

in general may be taken as some proof of the author's talents in a different style of composition.

'It is a wonder to se theyre dyssemblyng,
Theyre flatteryng countenaunce, theyre ingratytude,
Inconstance, fals witnese, faynyd wepyng,
Theyre vayn glory, and how they can delude ;
Theyre folyshnes, theyre jangling not mewde,
Theyre lecherous lust, and wylenes therfore,
Whychcrafts, and charmys to make men theyre lore ;
Theyre embawmyng, and theyre unshamfastnes,
Theyre bawdry, theyre suttelte, and fresh attyryng ;
What trimmyng, what payntyng to make fayrenes,
Theyre fals intents, and flykkeryng smylyng.
Therefore, lo ! yt is an old sayeng,
That women be the dyvells netts, and hed of syn,
And manneys mysery in paradyse dyd begyn.'

There is nothing remarkable in the moral lecture of old Danio at the close. No poetical justice is done to Calisto, nor to his instrument, Celestina, of whom we hear nothing after Melibea has given away her girdle; and the piece is wound up by the following lines :—

'Wherfore the eternall god, that raynyth on hye,
Send his mercifull grace and influens,
To all governours, that they circumspectly
May rule theyr inferiours, by such prudence
To bryng them to vertew and dew obedyens ;
And that they, and we all, by his grete mercy,
May be parteners of hys blessyd glory.—Amen.'

It will be obvious, that this singular performance brings us near to the verge of Tragedy and Comedy.

TRAGEDY AND COMEDY.

INTRODUCTION.

THE performance of Moral-plays was not entirely discontinued until the end of the reign of Elizabeth, and one of the last dramatic representations she beheld was a production of that description — *The Contention between Liberality and Prodigality*, played before her, in the forty-third year of her reign. Tragedy and Comedy, as we at present understand the terms, had their birth more than half a century before they gained sufficient strength and maturity to drive their elder rivals finally from the stage. The latter, however, were enabled to keep possession so long, partly by means of the approaches, we have been employed in tracing, to the more popular species of composition, and partly because, under the form of allegorical fiction and abstract character, the writers were able to introduce matter which covertly touched upon public events, popular prejudices, and temporary interests. To this class belong especially *The Three Ladies* and *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*, before noticed, and some pieces (alluded to by Nash and other pamphleteers) relating to the Martin Marprelate controversy, which unluckily have not survived the occasion they were written for, but which must have contained a great deal that was amusing, curious, and informing.

By Tragedy and Comedy, we mean theatrical productions, the characters in which are either drawn from life, or are intended to represent life, whether those characters be actual

or imaginary : the terms include also a species of drama, well known of old in the literature of this country, called 'History', or 'Chronicle History'; which consisted of certain passages, or events detailed by annalists, put into a dramatic form, often without regard to the course in which they happened ; the author sacrificing chronology, situation, and circumstance to the to him superior object of producing an attractive play. It is the disregard of the trammels of the three unities which constitutes our 'romantic drama', whether the story be real or fictitious ; and from the earliest period to the time of Shakespeare, there is, perhaps, not a play in our language in which they are observed with absolute strictness. The words 'romantic drama' have reference to form and construction merely, and do not in any respect relate to sentiment or language. In our progress, we shall have occasion to advert to several pieces, such as *Ferrex and Porrex*, *Jocasta*, and *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, which, in some not unimportant particulars of their external shape, are made to imitate, somewhat clumsily perhaps, the productions of the Greek and Latin stages ; but in all of them time, place, and action are more or less disregarded.

If this statement be correct, it follows that our romantic drama may be said to have had its origin with the origin of Tragedy and Comedy, although it reached perfection only in the hands of Shakespeare, who added to it the power, brilliancy and luxuriance of poetry, and the graces of style : before, however, he began to write for the stage, it was, in all essentials, fully formed and completely matured.

Our earliest comedy, *Ralph Roister Doister*, belongs to the reign of Edward VI, if not to that of his father ; but the first historical subject regularly brought upon the stage of this country was *Ferrex and Porrex*, in 1561-2,¹ and it was followed

¹ John Bale, Bishop of Ossory under Edward VI, wrote (as has been

almost immediately by *Julius Cæsar*, as we apprehend, the earliest instance on record in which events from the Roman history were dramatised in English. The precise nature of this performance, which is only noticed in an old MS. Chronicle (see *Annals of the Stage*, vol. i, p. 176) cannot be ascertained. Preston's *Cambyzes*, already dismissed among Moral-plays, is supposed to have been written about the same date; but it is doubtful whether the last three were not preceded by a tragedy upon Luigi da Porto's famous novel of *Romeo and Juliet*: Arthur Brooke, in the address 'to the Readers', before his narrative poem on this subject, printed in 1562, mentions that he had seen 'the same argument lately set forth on stage'; by which we are no doubt to understand the English stage, or he would have specified the contrary, and would not have lamented that he could not deserve the same degree of commendation.¹ From about this date until shortly after the year 1570, the field, as far as we have the means of judging,

already seen by the list of his dramatic works) a religious piece relating to King John's quarrel with the Pope, and another on the two marriages of Henry VIII, perhaps of a similar tendency, and connected with the progress of the Reformation. The first has survived; but probably in no sense of the words, as we now understand them, could they be considered historical plays. The play upon the romantic incidents of the life of *Robert of Cicily*, acted as early as the reign of Henry VII, and repeated during that of his successor, was, doubtless, conducted like a Miracle-play upon the life of a saint or martyr.

¹ Malone argued that Shakespeare borrowed his plot chiefly from Arthur Brooke's poem, while Steevens was of opinion that he followed the novel, as translated in *The Palace of Pleasure*. It does not seem to have occurred to these commentators, that our great dramatist may in this, as in other instances, have availed himself of the assistance of earlier stage poets; and it is highly improbable that a story, so interesting and so popular, should have remained unadapted to our stage until 1596, when the commentators suppose Shakespeare to have produced our earliest tragedy on the subject.

seems to have been pretty equally divided between the later Morals and the earlier, and very imperfect, attempts in Tragedy, Comedy, and History. In some pieces of about this date (as well as subsequently), we see endeavours made, as has been already shown, to reconcile or combine the two different modes of writing; but Morals afterwards generally gave way, and yielded the victory to a more popular and more intelligible species of performance. The licence to James Burbadge and others in 1574, mentions '*comedies, tragedies, interludes and stage-plays*'; and in the act of Common Council against their performance in the city, in the following year, theatrical performances are designated as '*interludes, tragedies, comedies, and shows*'; including much more than the old Miracle-plays, or more recent Moral-plays, which would be embraced by the words '*interludes*', '*shows*', and even '*stage-plays*', but to which the terms '*tragedies*' and '*comedies*', found in both instruments, could not be so properly applicable.¹

The fact that the taste of the people, about this period, had been weaned in a great degree from the dull abstractions of Moral-plays, and that a new species of dramatic entertainment had been introduced into our public theatres with great success, is proved by a contemporary author, who made himself sufficiently notorious, first as a writer (if not an actor) of plays, and subsequently as a vigorous and persevering enemy of dramatic representations—Stephen Gosson. He published his first attack upon the stage, *The School of Abuse*, in 1579, and two years before it appeared,² he had written '*the comedy*

¹ Nevertheless, in our progress we have seen the terms misapplied, both by the authors of religious plays and of Morals, upon their title-pages. As late as 1578, Thomas Lupton called his Moral of *All for Money* both a *tragedy* and a *comedy*—a fact which of itself shows the vague notions then attached to the words.

² 'Since my publishing *The School of Abuse*, two playes of my making

of *Captain Mario* (which he calls 'a cast of Italian devises', and which was probably founded upon some foreign novel), and a Moral, *Praise at Parting*. He was also, as he himself admits, the author of an historical play, called *Cataline's Conspiracies*, of which he observes, 'the whole mark I shot at in that work, was to show the reward of traitors in Cataline, and the necessary government of learned men in the person of Cicero, which forsees every danger that is likely to happen, and forstals it continually ere it take effect.'¹ *Cæsar and Pompey*, and *the Fabii*,² are other historical subjects, noticed by him as having been treated by dramatists of that time; to which he adds *Cupid and Psyche*, and *The Blacksmith's*

were brought to the stage: the one was a cast of Italian devises, called the comedie of *Captain Mario*; the other a Moral, *Praise at Parting*. These they very impudentlie affirme to be written by me since I had set out my invective against them. I cannot denie they were both mine; but they were both penned two yeeres, at the least, before I forsook them.' Preface to Gosson's *Plays Confuted in Five Actions*.

¹ *School of Abuse*, 1579. Thomas Lodge, in his *Answer to Gosson* (of which only two copies, and those without a title-page, are known to exist) printed very soon after the appearance of the *School of Abuse* in 1579, charges him with being a plagiary in his drama founded upon the history of Catiline, which Gosson had called, not very elegantly, 'a pig of his own sow'. 'But', says Lodge, 'for the pigg of your own sow (as you terme it) assuredly I must discommend your verdit. Tell me, Gosson, was all your owne you wrote there? Did you borrow nothing of your neyghbours? Out of what book patched you out Cicero's oration? Whence fet you Catalin's invective? Thys is one thing *alienam olet lucerna, non tuam*: so that your helper may wisely reply upon you with *Virgil*,

'*Hos ego versiculos feci, tulit alter honores.*'

'I made the verses, other beare the name.'

² Possibly it was the play performed before Queen Elizabeth, in 1580, under the title (as it stands in the accounts of the Revels of that year) of *A History of the Four Sons of Fabius*. In 1573 a History called *Quintus Fabius* had been played before Elizabeth.

Daughter, containing, as he states, 'the treachery of Turks, the honourable 'bounty of a noble mind, and the shining of virtue in distress'; and *The Jew and Ptolemy*, the subject of which was the 'greediness of worldly chusers, and the bloody minds of usurers'.

Gosson admits that from all these pieces useful moral lessons might be drawn, and we are left to infer that they were in verse (and of course in rhyme, for blank-verse was not known on the public stage until twelve years afterwards), because he distinguishes 'two *prose* books' (the names of which he does not furnish), describing 'how seditious estates with their own devices, false friends with their own swords, and rebellious commons with their own snares, are overthrown'. These various dramas were performed either on open stages, temporarily erected in the inn-yards of the Bell-savage and Red Bull, or at the Theatre and Curtain in Shoreditch, both open, and in full employment, about the date of which we are now speaking.

Some two years after the publication of *The School of Abuse*, in 1579,¹ Gosson printed another tract, following up his assault; and here he furnishes an account of the varied sources from which dramatic poets of that day usually drew their plots. In his *Plays confuted in five Actions*, in reply to Lodge, he says, 'I may boldly say it, because I have seen it, that *The Palace of Pleasure*, *The Golden Ass*, *The Æthiopian History*, *Amadis of France*, and *The Round Table*, bawdy comedies in Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish, have been thoroughly ransacked to furnish the playhouses in London'. The novels, histories, tales, and plays Gosson thus points out, in fact supplied most of the materials for our romantic drama,

¹ It bears the date of 1579, but it was probably written at the close of 1578, as in 1579 appeared 'a short Apologie of the Schoole of Abuse', in Gosson's *Ephemerides of Phialo*.

then beginning to flourish vigorously in popular favour.¹ Farther on he is even more particular: 'Sometimes (he says)

¹ In the Prologue to his *Royal King and Loyal Subject*, Thomas Heywood gives an enumeration of the vast variety of matters embraced by dramatists in his day; and it is to be recollected that he was a writer for the stage some years before the death of Elizabeth, as well as long afterwards.

'To give content to this most curious age,
The gods themselves we've brought down to the stage,
And figur'd them in planets—made even Hell
Deliver up the Furies, by no spell
Saving the Muse's rapture. Further we
Have traffick'd by their help: no history
We've left unrifled: our pens have been dipt,
As well in opening each hid manuscript,
As tracts more vulgar, whether read or sung
In our domestic or more foreign tongue.
Of Fairy elves, nymphs of the sea, and land,
The lawns and groves: no number can be scann'd
Which we've not given feet to; nay, 'tis known
That when our Chronicles have barren grown
Of story, we have all invention stretch'd,
Div'd low as to the centre, and then reach'd
Unto the *primum mobile* above
(Nor 'scap'd things intermediate) for your love.
These have been acted often; all have past
Censure, of which some live and some are cast.'

This play was not printed until 1637; but it was unquestionably older, and perhaps one of its author's early productions: the Epilogue affords evidence, that it was written before the use of rhyme on the public stage had been forgotten:

'We know (and *not long since*) there was a time
Strong lines were not look'd after; but if *rhime*,
Oh, then 'twas excellent,' etc.

Barnabe Rich printed his *Farewell to Military Profession* in 1581, and, in an address to the Reader at the end, he mentions that several of the novels of which the work consists had been acted upon the stage.—

you shall see nothing but the adventures of an amorous knight, passing from country to country for the love of his lady, encountering many a terrible monster, made of brown paper; and at his return is so wonderfully changed, that he cannot be known but by some posy in his tablet, or by a broken ring, or a handkerchief, or a piece of a cockle shell'. He afterwards adverts to the manner in which historical subjects were handled by poets of his day:—'If a true history be taken in hand, it is made, like our shadows, longest at the rising and falling of the sun, shortest of all at high noon; for the poets drive it most commonly unto such points, as may best show the majesty of their pen in tragical speeches, or set the hearers agog with discourses of love, or paint a few anticks to fit their owne humors with scoffs and taunts, or bring in a shewe to furnish the stage when it is bare: when the matter of itself comes short of this, they follow the practice of the cobbler, and set their teeth to the leather to pull it out.'

Whetstone, the author of *Promos and Cassandra*, 1578 (a play on the same incidents as Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*), in a complaint he makes against the romantic

'Gentle Reader,—Now thou hast perused these Histories to the ende, I doubt not but thou wilt deeme of them as thei worthily deserve, and thinke such vanities more fitter to be presented on a stage (as some of them have been) then to be published in Printe,' etc. The novels are eight in number, some the author's invention and others translated. Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* was founded upon one of them; *The Weakest goeth to the Wall* upon another, and the old Scotch play of *Philotus* upon a third. This rare book was printed again in 1606.

In a passage in his *Apology for Actors*, 1612 (quoted by Malone, *Shakespeare by Boswell*, iii, 41), Heywood speaks of the advantages derived by the ignorant from dramatic *Histories*: he tells us, that they have 'instructed the unlearned', and asks, 'what man have you now of that weak capacity that cannot discourse of any notable thing recorded, even from William the Conqueror, nay, from the landing of Brute, until this day?' Variety was endless.

dramatists of this country,¹ seems to point at some particular play or plays, which, in his opinion, offended against all probability and decorum: the passage in our present view is very curious:—‘The Englishman (says he) in this quality is most vain, indiscreet, and out of order: he first grounds his work on impossibilities; then in three hours runs he through the world, marries, gets children, makes children men, men to conquer kingdoms, murder monsters, and bringeth gods from heaven and fetcheth devils from hell. And (that which is worst) their ground is not so unperfect as their working indiscreet; not weighing, so the people laugh, though they laugh them (for their follies) to scorn: many times (to make mirth) they make a clown companion with a king: in their grave councils they allow the advice of fools: yea, they use one order of speech for all persons, a gross indecorum; for a crow will ill counterfeit the nightingale’s sweet voice: even so affected speech doth misbecome a clown; for to work a comedy kindly, grave old men should instruct, young men should show the imperfections of youth, strumpets should be lascivious, boys unhappy, and clowns should speak disorderly; intermingling all these actions in such sort as the grave matter may instruct and the pleasant delight: for without this change the attention would be small and the liking less.’

To the same point we may quote the authority of Sir

Philippe Sidney

¹ In the Dedication of *Promos and Cassandra* to Fleetwood, Recorder of London, and by no means a friend to the stage.

who is supposed to have written his *Apology of Poetry* (not printed until 1590) about the year 1583, and who objects even to the tragedy of *Ferrex and Porrex*, (which he calls *Gorboduc*, as it was sometimes entitled), that the unities of time and place are disregarded. He was a strenuous advocate for the observance of the rules of the ancients, and goes over the ground which Whetstone, five years before, had travelled, particularly pointing out the total neglect of dramatic propriety. The whole passage must be quoted, as it affords a clear and exact account of the condition and nature of our popular drama previous to the date when it was penned.

‘Our tragedies and comedies, not without cause cried out against, observing rules neither of honest civility, nor skilful poetry, excepting *Gorboduc* (again I say of those that I have seen), which notwithstanding as it is full of stately speeches and well sounding phrases, climbing to the height of Seneca his style, and as full of notable morality, which it doth most delightfully teach, and so obtain the very end of poesy, yet, in truth, it is very defectious in the circumstances; which grieves me, because it might not remain as an exact model of all tragedies: for it is faulty both in place and time, the two necessary companions of all corporal actions. . . . But if it be so in *Gorboduc* how much more in all the rest, where you shall have Asia of the one side, and Affric of the other, and so many other under-kingdoms, that the player when he comes in must ever begin with telling where he is, or else the tale will not be conceived. Now you shall have three ladies walk to gather flowers, and then we must believe the stage to be a garden: by and by we hear news of shipwreck in the same place; then we are to blame if we accept it not for a rock. Upon the back of that comes out a hideous monster with fire and smoke, and then the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave; while in the mean time two armies fly in, represented with four swords and bucklers, and then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field? Now, of time they are much more liberal; for ordinary it is that two young princes fall in love: after many traverses

she is got with child, delivered of a fair boy ; he is lost, groweth a man, falleth in love, and is ready to get another child, and all this in two hours' space : which how absurd it is in sense, even sense may imagine, and art hath taught, and all examples justified, and at this day the ordinary players in Italy will not err in. . . . But they will say, how then shall we set forth a story which contains both many places and many times ? And do they not know that tragedy is tied to the laws of poesy, and not of history ?—not bound to follow the story, but having liberty either to feign a quite new matter, or to frame the history to the most tragical conveniency ? Again, many things may be told which cannot be shewed, if they know the difference betwixt reporting and representing : as for example ; I may speak, though I am here, of Peru, and in speech digress from that to the description of Calecut, but in action I cannot represent it without Pa-colet's horse. And so was the manner the ancients took by some Nuntius to recount things done in former time, or other place. Lastly, if they will represent a history, they must not (as Horace saith) begin *ab ovo*, but they must come to the principal point of that one action which they will represent. By example this will be best expressed : I have a story of young Polydorus, delivered for safety's sake with great riches by his father Priamus to Polymnestor, King of Thrace, in the Trojan war time. He, after some years, hearing of the overthrow of Priamus, for to make the treasure his own, murdereth the child : the body of the child is taken up ; Hecuba, she the same day findeth a sleight to be revenged most cruelly of the tyrant. Where, now, would one of our tragedy-writers begin, but with the delivery of the child ? Then should he sail over into Thrace and so spend, I know not how many years, and travel numbers of places. But where doth Euripides ? even with the finding of the body, the rest leaving to be told by the spirit of Polydorus. This needs no further to be enlarged ; the dullest wit may conceive it. But besides these gross absurdities, how all their plays be neither right tragedies nor right comedies, mingling kings and clowns, not because the matter so carrieth it, but thrust in the clown by head and shoulders¹ to play a part in majestical matters with

¹ George Chapman alludes to this species of impropriety in older plays

neither decency nor discretion; so as neither the admiration and commiseration, nor right sportfulness is by their mongrel tragicomedy obtained.¹

So much with regard to the matter and form of plays, prior to the year 1583, showing, beyond contradiction, that even at that early date they came strictly within the description of *romantic drama*, which Shakespeare, by some, is erroneously supposed to have created, and which we are bound to rejoice that he did not create; but merely followed the method of his day, supported by the example of the most distinguished dramatic poets. In his *Plays confuted in five Actions*, which, as the reader may remember, was printed shortly before Sir P. Sidney's *Apology of Poetry* was produced, Gosson also notices the style and manner of the composition of dramatic works, in a strain of praise that does not seem fully justified by anything of that date which has descended to us. We make the following extract in order to show what a rival, but repentant, play-poet thought of the language of the dramas of his time; although we must recollect that his argument against the stage

in his *Humorous Days Mirth*, 1599. In the first scene Lemot says—'I will sit like an old king in an *old fashion play*, having his wife, his counsel, his children and his fool about him, to whom he will sit and point very learnedly as followeth:—

'My counsel grave, and you, my noble peers,
My tender wife, and you, my children dear,
And thou my fool.'

¹ On this point, also, the following may be cited from Florio's *First Fruits*, 1591, where the very words of Sir P. Sidney are adopted.

'G.—After dinner we will go see a play.

H.—The plays that they play in England are not right comedies.

T.—Yet they do nothing else but play every day.

H.—Yea, but they are neither right comedies nor right tragedies.

G.—How would you name them then?

H.—Representations of histories without any decorum.'

required that he should represent its performances as attractive and seductive as possible:—‘Thus (he observes) when any matter of love is interlarded, though the thing itself be able to allure us, yet it is so set out with sweetness of words, fitness of epithets, with metaphors, allegories, hyperbolies, amphibologies, similitudes, with phrases so picked, so pure, so proper, with action so smooth, so lively, so wanton, that the poison, creeping on so secretly without grief, chokes us at last, and hurleth us down in a dead sleep. As the devil hath brought in all that poetry can sing, so hath he sought out every strain that music is able to pipe, and drawn all kind of instruments into that compass, simple and mixed.—For the eye, beside the beauty of the houses and the stages, he sendeth in garish apparel, masks, vaulting, tumbling, dancing of jiggs, galiards, morisces, hobby-horses, shewing of juggling casts, nothing forgot that might serve out the matter with pomp, or ravish the beholders with variety of pleasure.’

Sir P. Sidney says nothing of the performance of Miracle-plays in his time; but we know from many other authorities, that while the romantic drama was thus establishing itself, and while Morals were still frequently exhibited, performances founded upon Scripture history continued to be represented. John Northbrooke, ‘Minister and preacher of the Word of God’, in his *Treatise wherein Dicing, Dauncing, vaine Playes or Interluds, etc., are reprovéd* (written prior to 1577, when it was first entered for publication on the Stationers’ books), violently inveighs against the still prevalent practice of ‘handling upon scaffolds God’s divine mysteries with such unreverentness and irreligiousness.’¹ Thus the three kinds of

¹ We quote from an edition without date, ‘Imprinted by H. Bynneman for George Bishop’. Not having been printed in 1577, the work was again licensed for publication in 1578, and it appeared in 1579.

The author of the *Second and Third Blast of Retrait from Plaies and*

theatrical representations may be said to have been current at the same time—Miracle-plays, Moral-plays, and romantic dramas. The first, then confined chiefly to country places, were soon generally discontinued; and we have no specimen of what may be strictly called a Moral-play subsequent to the demise of Elizabeth.¹

On the authority of Whetstone, Gosson, and Sidney, we have thus ascertained the state of our drama until about 1583; and in that year, as has been seen in the *Annals of the Stage*, the Queen first allowed a public company to act under her name and authority. About this period also the dramatists, who may properly be considered the predecessors of Shakespeare, began to flourish. Lodge, Peele, and Greene had, perhaps, recently commenced their career, and within a very short interval, Marlow, by his example and popularity, produced a very important change in dramatic poetry. Until about 1586, theatrical productions were written chiefly in rhyme, but sometimes in prose; and, as will be shown in our review of the productions of Marlow, he was the first to adopt blank verse on the public stage, and to reject what he calls the 'jigging vein of rhyming mother-wits'. It was also a most striking epoch for our national drama on another account: Shakespeare is supposed to have left Stratford-upon-Avon, and to have come to London 'about the year 1586 or 1587.'² Upon this point it is not possible to go beyond

Theatres, 1580, who had himself, like Gosson, been a play-maker, violently inveighs against the performance of what he terms 'spiritual Moralities', by 'blasphemous players'. p. 103.

¹ *Lingua Pathomachio*, *The Muses Looking Glass*, and *Microcosmus* (which is expressly called 'a Moral Mask') partake in some degree of the nature of Morals; in the same way that *David and Bethsabe*, *An Alarum for London*, and several others, partake of the nature of Miracles.

² Malone's *Shakespeare by Boswell*, ii, 157.

plausible conjecture, but that event cannot be certainly assigned to an earlier date. It has often been remarked, that such of his productions as with the greatest appearance of probability can be named among his first performances, contain evidence of the partiality of his ear, and of that of the public, for the jingle of rhyme, even after Marlow may be said to have accomplished the great change to blank verse.

Malone took laborious pains to establish that Spenser, in that part of his *Tears of the Muses*, 1590, which is devoted to the complaint of Thalia, not only could have no intention to allude to Shakespeare, but that the person he meant to designate was John Lyly, whose earliest dramatic performance bears date in 1584.¹ In the first part of this proposition we entirely agree, but Malone has failed in establishing at all completely the correctness of the second part of it: the lines in question follow the expression of regret by the comic Muse, that dramatic poetry had declined, and that 'vain toys the vulgar entertained', instead of

'Fine counterfeisance and unhurtful sport,
Delight and laughter, deck'd in seemly sort—'

by which it had before been distinguished:—they run thus:

'All these, and all that else the comic stage
With season'd wit and goodly pleasance graced,
By which man's life in his likest image
Was limned forth, are wholly now defaced;
And those sweet wits which wont the like to frame,
Are now despis'd, and made a laughing game.

'And he, the man, whom Nature self had made
To mock herself, and truth to imitate
With kindly counter under mimic shade,
Our pleasant Willy, ah! is dead of late:

¹ *Shakespeare by Boswell*, ii, 167, et seq.

With whom all joy and jolly merriment
Is also deaded, and in dolour drent.

‘Instead thereof, scoffing scurrility,
And scornful folly, with contempt, is crept
Rolling in rhimes of shameless ribaldry
Without regard, or due decorum kept :
Each idle wit at will presumes to make,
And doth the learned’s task upon him take.’

These stanzas we have quoted, because they relate to the condition of the stage prior to the year 1590, when they were published ; and our principal reason for dissenting from the notion that John Lyly is here intended, is, that although many, if not all of his plays have reached us in a more perfect shape than those of his contemporaries, he by no means merits the high character given of him by a judge so competent as Spenser :¹ at the same time, it would be difficult to point out any dramatic author, prior to 1590, to whom it would justly apply. Had it not been certain that it was

¹ Malone has indulged in various conjectures as to the poets alluded to in another poem by Spencer, *Colin Clout’s come home again*, and he has shown much industry and research in supporting them. Spenser is enumerating, by names real or feigned, the poets of the time in which he flourished : Harpalus (among others) Malone says, means Churchyard—

‘There is good Harpalus, now waxen aged
In faithful service of fair Cynthia.’

But he is decidedly wrong, for Churchyard, as he himself acknowledges, was designated by ‘old Palemon’ :

‘And there is old Palemon, free from spite,
Whose careful pipe may make the hearer rue ;
Yet he himself may rewed be more right,
That sung so long until quite hoarse he grew.’

These lines, as Malone proves, though erroneously dated in 1591, were written late in 1594, the figure 1 being misprinted for 4 ; and in 1596, Churchyard, writing his *Pleasant Discourse of Court and Wars*, admits

written at so early a date, and that Shakespeare could not then have exhibited his talents and acquired reputation, we the correctness of the likeness drawn by Spenser. He says that the Court is—

‘The platform where all poets thrive,
Save one, *whose voice is hoarse they say*;
The stage where time away we drive,
As children in a Pageant play
To please the lookers on some time,
With words, with books in prose or rhyme.’

As ‘old Palemon’ is Churchyard, of course Harpalus must mean a different man; and possibly, as he had ‘waxen aged in faithful service of fair Cynthia’, Lord Buckhurst was intended.

Alabaster is mentioned by name; and Malone, as a great curiosity, published, imperfectly, two sonnets by him, the only specimens he could recover of his English poetry, which were found in a MS. of Archbishop Sancroft’s in the Bodleian. We have a MS. containing seventeen original sonnets, entitled, *Devine Meditations, by Mr. Alablaster*, one of which is nearly the same as the first of those printed by Malone: the rest are all different. The main body of the MS. consists of sermons by Dr. Donne, Dr. King, etc., etc.: at the end is an assemblage of miscellaneous poems, chiefly upon sacred subjects, collected in the reign of James I. We add the following by Alabaster (or Alablaster) *On St. Augustine’s Meditations*:—

‘When to the closet of thy prayers divine,
And sacred Muse (sweet Austin) I retire,
My thoughts are ravished with high desire,
That where I am I cannot well define.
So leave I th’ earth, so I the Heavens confine.—
The leaves methinks are like Heaven’s crystal tire,
With flames unburned with devotion’s fire:
The words are stars, which beamy letters shine;
Each chapter parts like a constellat signe,
Wherein Christ Jesus with his heavenly sire,
And lovely spirit in chariot seraphine
Sits mounted on the winged cherubine.
Austin, where are we? Are the Heavens come nigher,
Or is my earthly soul aspired higher?’

should say at once, that it could be meant for no other poet: it reads like a prophetic anticipation, which could not have been fulfilled by Shakespeare until several years after it was published. While we dissent from the opinion that Lyly was the poet intended by Spenser, we must do justice to the learning and ingenuity Malone has displayed in conducting his argument. The different productions of Lyly are examined by us elsewhere, and from thence some judgment may be formed to what extent the praise of Spenser was merited. In denying that he was the 'pleasant Willy' of Spenser, we leave out of the question the expression 'is dead of late', because, construed with reference to a succeeding stanza of the same poem, it is at least doubtful whether Spenser alludes to the natural demise of the poet he celebrates.

In order to decide who were the precursors of Shakespeare,

After his return from Cadiz with Lord Essex, Alabaster became a papist, but soon returned to the Church of England. The subsequent effusion, *Of his Conversion*, is therefore curious in a biographical point of view.

'Away, fear, with thy projects ! no false fire
Which thou dost make can aught my courage quail,
Or cause me leward come and strike my sail.
What if the world do frown at my retire,
What if denial both my wish'd desire
And purblind pity doth my state bewail,
And wonder cross itself and free speech rail,
And greatness take it not, and death sue nigher.
Tell, then, my soul, the fear that makes me quake,
The smould'ring brimstone and the burning lake,
Like feeding death, ever life devouring,
Torments not mov'd, unheard, and yet still roaring ;
God lost, hell found, ever, never begun,
Now bid me into flame from smoke to run.'

We do not pretend to be able to solve the mystery of the last six lines ; and of the whole collection we may observe, as Malone said of the two sonnets he discovered, 'the piety is much more obvious than the poetry'.

it is necessary, as nearly as we can, to determine at what date he began to write for the theatre or company to which he attached himself on his arrival in London.

It has generally been thought, and perhaps correctly, that the following were some of the earliest plays with which Shakespeare had any concern: the three parts of *Henry VI* (if, indeed, he had anything at all to do with the first part), *The Comedy of Errors*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. These five plays are placed, in Malone's chronological list, in the years 1589, 1591, and 1592: and yet, a few pages farther on, he remarks, 'I should name the year 1591 as the era when our author *commenced* a writer for the stage'. However, this is not the only error or inconsistency into which Malone has fallen; for he mentions, as a proof that Shakespeare had not acquired any reputation before 1591, that Sir P. Sidney's *Apology of Poetry* 'has not the slightest allusion to him'; adding, that it was not published until 1595. It would have been singular indeed, if Sidney's *Apology of Poetry* had mentioned Shakespeare as a dramatic author, because the writer of it was killed before Zutphen in the very year in which Malone 'supposed' that our great dramatist came to London, and because most likely it was not written after 1583. If, therefore, Sidney had alluded to Shakespeare as a dramatic poet, three years before he quitted his native town, it could only have been in the miraculous spirit of prophesy; and it is strange that Malone, in his eagerness to support a theory, should never have adverted to the fact, that the premature death of Sidney rendered it impossible that he should have noticed Shakespeare in any of his works. The argument he builds upon the silence of Puttenham in his *Art of English Poesy*, 1589, and of Sir John Harington, in his *Apology of Poetry*, 1591, is better founded;¹

¹ Yet an argument resting upon the silence of contemporaries at best

but the authority of Webbe, in his *Discourse of English Poetry*, 1586 (which he also cites), will prove nothing, because it was only in that year, at the very earliest, that Shakespeare joined a theatrical company.

Nevertheless, we agree with Malone in thinking that if Shakespeare 'commenced a writer for the stage' in 1591, by the improvement and alteration of the works of earlier dramatists, he did not produce any original drama of his own until 1593; and this opinion will reconcile, if it do not remove, the difficulty that has hitherto presented itself, founded upon Shakespeare's expression in the dedication of his *Venus and Adonis* to Lord Southampton, in 1593—that it was 'the *first heir* of his invention'. It might be 'the first heir of his invention' in two ways:—because it was actually the first poem he ever wrote, and which had been for some years in manuscript; and because the plays upon which he had been engaged until 1593, were not of his 'invention', but the invention of preceding or contemporary poets, on which he had been employed only in making additions.

The supposition that Shakespeare did not become an original dramatic author until 1593, also gives full point to the charge peevishly and enviously brought against him, by Robert Greene, in his *Groatsworth of Wit*, 1592:—'There is amounts to little. A striking proof of it is to be found in *The Return from Parnassus*, a play printed in 1606, and written about 1602, where, after Marston, Marlow, Ben Jonson, and other dramatists have been mentioned, Shakespeare is thus introduced—

'Who loves Adonis love, or Lucrece rape?
His sweeter verse contains heart-robbling life,
Could but a graver subject him content,
Without love's foolish lazy languishment.'

Here *Venus and Adonis*, and *The Rape of Lucrece* only are spoken of; and it seems asserted positively, and not negatively, as a matter of complaint, that Shakespeare had taken up no 'graver subject' as late as 1602.

an upstart crow, *beautified with our feathers*, that with his tiger's heart wrapt in a player's hide supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank-verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes Fac-totum*, is, in his own conceit, the only Shake-scene in a country.' Here the words 'upstart crow beautified with our feathers', clearly mean that Shakespeare, in 1592, had gained reputation by altering and amending the plays of preceding dramatists. Of course, this passage is quoted and remarked upon at length by Malone,¹ but he does not refer to a curious paragraph, in some manner connected with it, in Chettle's *Kindheart's Dream* (which immediately followed the publication of the *Groatsworth of Wit*), where Greene is thus mentioned: 'He was of singular pleasure, the very supporter, and to no man's disgrace be this intended, the *only comedian* of a vulgar writer in this country.' Greene is thus placed above all his contemporaries, and hence, coupled with what precedes, we may fairly conclude, that to the end of 1592 (for Greene died in September of that year, and both the *Groatsworth of Wit* and *Kind-heart's Dream* were published afterwards, bearing the date of 1592), Shakespeare had not acquired reputation as an original dramatic poet. It is to be recollected also, that at this date the year 1592 did not terminate until the 25th March 1593, up to which period, in the opinion of Chettle, confirmed probably by that of the public, Shakespeare was inferior to Greene. Chettle's words, 'the only comedian of a vulgar writer', do not mean that Greene was an applauded actor, but that he was a comic play-writer of the highest popularity. It is not immaterial also to observe, that in the petition presented to the Privy Council by the Lord Chamberlain's servants in 1596, Shakespeare's name stands fifth, only preceding Kempe, Slye, and Tooley, which serves to show, that even then his

¹ *Shakespeare by Boswell*, ii, 304.

station, as an author and an actor, was not by any means prominent.

All dramatic poets, therefore, who had written plays prior to the year 1593, may be fairly considered the predecessors of Shakespeare; and in a subsequent part of this work we have examined the merits and pretensions of all the principal play-poets who enjoy this distinction, and whose productions have been handed down to us. Connected with the general state of the dramatic art, just anterior to the time when Shakespeare became a popular professor of it, there is some curious information in the 'induction' to an old tragedy, called *A Warning for Fair Women*, the plot of which relates to the murder of a London merchant, by his wife and her paramour, in the year 1573.¹ From internal evidence, we may decide that it was written shortly before 1590, although it did not come from the press until 1599. Tragedy, History, and Comedy, are there personified, each claiming superiority and

¹ Towards the end of this play is related the following incident, founded upon fact, and intended to prove the utility of theatrical representations :

'A woman that had made away her husband,
And sitting to behold a tragedy
At Lynne, a town in Norfolk,
Acted by players travelling that way,
Wherein a woman that had murdered hers,
Was ever haunted with her husband's ghost,
The passion written by a feeling pen,
And acted by a good tragedian,
She was so moved with the sight thereof,
As she cried out, the play was made by her,
And openly confess'd her husband's murder.'

This is the same anecdote, employed for the same purpose by Heywood, in his *Apology for Actors*, 1612, book iii. He enters into more particulars, and says that the play was *The Old History of Friar Francis*, and that it was performed by the players of the Earl of Sussex, Lord Chamberlain until his death in 1585.

the possession of the stage : the dialogue between them relates almost solely to the nature of dramatic representations at that date, and is well worth quoting : some particular performances were no doubt pointed at by both Tragedy and Comedy, though it is now impossible to recognise them. Tragedy, addressing Comedy, says :—

‘ I must confess you have some sparks of wit,
Some odd ends of old jests, scrap’d up together
To tickle shallow injudicial ears ;
Perhaps some puling passion of a lover,
But slight and childish. What is that to me ?
I must have passions that must move the soul,
Make the heart heave and throb within the bosom,
Extorting teares out of the strictest eyes,
To rack a thought and strain it to his form,
Untill I rap the senses from their course.
This is my office.

Comedy.—How some damn’d tyrant to obtain a crown,
Stabs, hangs, impoisons, smothers, cutteth throats ;
And then a Chorus, too, comes howling in,
And tells us of the worrying of a cat :
Then of a filthy whining ghost,
Lapt in some foul sheet, or a leather pilch,
Comes screaming like a pig half stick’d, and cries
Vindicta ! revenge, revenge !
With that a little rosin flasheth forth,
Like smoke out of a tobacco-pipe, or a boy’s squib :
Then comes in two or three like to drovers,
With tailors bodkins stabbing one another.
Is not this trim ? is not here goodly things ?
That you should be so much accounted of,
I would not else.

History.—Now, before God, thou’lt make her mad anon,
Thy jests are like a wisp unto a scold.

Comedy.—Why, say I could, what care I, History?
Then shall we have a tragedy indeed ;
Pure purple buskin, blood and murder right.

Tragedy.—Thus with your loose and idle similies
You have abus'd me : but I'll whip you hence :
I'll scourge and lash you both from off the stage.

[*She whips them.*]

'Tis you have kept the Theatres so long,
Painted in play-bills upon every post,
That I am scorned of the multitude,
My name profan'd :¹ but now I'll reign as Queen,
In great Apollo's name and all the Muses,
By virtue of whose Godhead I am sent.
I charge you to be gone and leave this place.

History.—Look, Comedy : I mark'd it not till now,
The stage is hung with black, and I perceive
The auditors prepar'd for Tragedy.

Comedy.—Nay then, I see she shall be entertain'd :
These ornaments beseem not thee and me.
Then, Tragedy, kill them to-day with sorrow,
We'll make them laugh with mirthfull jests tomorrow.

¹ This complaint on the part of Tragedy, accords with the subsequently expressed sentiments of the author of *The Returne of the Knight of the Post from Hell*, 1606, who claims to have been intimate with T. Nash. The writer of this tract was not T. Dekker, as has been supposed, because in his *Newes from Hell*, 1606, Dekker expressly denies it, and adds that he does not know the author. 'Hence shall it come to pass (says this anonymous writer), that the lofty poem, wherein the soul of art shall be essentially infused, and the rare amazing passions of life-stirring tragedies shall be both neglected and unrewarded, whilst wanton Clio, in her comic lasciviousness, usurping upon the entertain of her ill-judging favourites, shall spread such new fashions in the court of men's unconstant affections, that, animated by the applause of their enduring sufferance, she shall, like a courtesan of the first defiling, by use of evil make men think there is no goodness but the evil which so much she boasteth.'

History.—And, Tragedy, although to-day thou reign,
To-morrow here I'll domineer again.' [Exeunt.

Previous to the time when Shakespeare commenced dramatic poet, it seems that an abuse had crept into theatrical performances, against which Robert Greene remonstrates in the epistle 'to the Gentlemen Students of both Universities', prefixed to his *Farewell to Folly*, first printed in 1591: we mean quoting Scripture in them, which of course afforded a strong and just argument to the puritanical enemies of the stage. He at the same time speaks with great contempt of some persons, who ignorantly presumed to set themselves up as dramatic poets, or, as he jocosely terms it, as 'the fathers of interludes', when they were obliged to call in the parish-clerks to assist them in getting through their undertaking. The whole passage was obviously aimed at some individual; but not so distinctly marked out as Shakespeare, when, in the next year, Greene called him 'the only Shake-scene in a country'. Greene's words are these:—

'He that cannot write true English without the help of clerks of Parish-churches will needs make himself the father of interludes. Oh! 'tis a jolly matter, when a man hath a familiar style, and can indite a whole year and never be beholding to art; but to bring Scripture to prove anything he says, and kill it dead with a text in a trifling subject of love, I tell you, is no small piece of cunning. As for example: two lovers on the stage arguing one another of unkindness, his mistress runs over him with this canonical sentence, "A man's conscience is a thousand witnesses"; and her knight again excuseth himself with that saying of the Apostle, "Love covereth the multitude of sins". I think this was but simple abusing of Scripture. In charity, be it spoken, I am persuaded the sexton of St. Giles', without Cripplegate, would have been ashamed of such blasphemous rhetoric.'¹

¹ Another abuse of a different kind was mentioned some years afterwards by Heywood, proofs of the existence of which will be found in the

Most of the authors of the period of which we are speaking were actors also, and it is not easy to find more than a few decided exceptions to the rule. Even Robert Greene, who had perhaps been in holy orders, appears to have performed the part of the Pinner in his own play of *George-a-Green*. John Lyly, who was a writer for the stage prior to 1584, is one of the very small number who does not seem to have been otherwise connected with it. George Peele, who came out at about the same date, there is every reason to suppose, was a player as well as a poet; and the same remark may apply to Christopher Marlow, regarding whom, however, the evidence is not so distinct. Anthony Munday and Henry Chettle, both notorious before 1593 (and who wrote pieces in conjunction), most likely belonged to the same company. Thomas Lodge was probably himself an actor when he wrote his *Defence of Plays* about 1580: and though we have no proof that Thomas Kyd or Thomas Nash were players as well as poets, the inference for the affirmative is strong, especially in the case of the former. These and more were the predecessors, and some of them the contemporaries of

Annals of the Stage, in the reign of James I, but which seems also to have prevailed at a much earlier date. 'Now', says Heywood, in his *Apology for Actors*, 1612, 'to speak of some abuse lately crept into the quality, as an inveighing against the State, the Court, the Law, the City, and their governments, with the particularising of private men's humour, yet alive, noblemen, and others. I know it distastes many; neither do I any way approve it, nor dare I by any means excuse it—the liberty which some arrogate to themselves, committing their bitterness and liberal invectives against all estates to the mouths of children, supposing their juniority to be a privilege for any railing, be it never so violent. I could advise all such to curbe and limit this presumed liberty within the bands of discretion and government.' It has been seen, that about the year 1590, the children of St. Paul's were silenced for meddling with a matter of government and religion, in which ridicule was attempted to be cast upon certain leaders among the Puritans.

Shakespeare, who, possibly, began his own career as a juvenile performer in his native town. Afterwards the instances became more numerous, and the proofs are more positive—Peele, Ben Jonson, Heywood, Field, Rowley, and many more, were actors as well as dramatic authors: if they were not, it was, we believe, rather the exception than the rule.

TRAGEDY AND COMEDY,

THEIR RISE AND PROGRESS IN ENGLAND.

RALPH ROISTER DOISTER.—GAMMER GURTON'S NEEDLE.—
MISOGONUS.—FERREX AND PORREX.

THOSE who have hitherto touched upon the origin and progress of the dramatic literature of this country have concurred with Wright (the author of *Historia Histrionica*, first published in 1699, and afterwards frequently reprinted), that 'the first comedy that looks like regular is *Gammer Gurton's Needle*'; but this is decidedly an error.

Warton states in one place that *Gammer Gurton's Needle* was printed in 1551, and in another that it was not written until 1552.¹ He seems to have had no other evidence than the opinion of Wright, who observes, 'it was writ, I think, in the reign of King Edward VI': it could not, however, have been produced so early, because John Still (afterwards Bishop of Bath and Wells), the author of it, was not born until 1543, and consequently, in 1552, taking Warton's latest date, would only have been nine years old. So far we arrive at certainty, but it is impossible to settle the date of the first appearance of *Gammer Gurton's Needle* with accuracy. Malone was of opinion, and with reason, that it was acted at Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1566, when Still was in his twenty-third year.

¹ Compare *Hist. Eng. Poet.*, iii, 205, and iv, 32.

A play has recently been discovered which undoubtedly takes precedence of *Gammer Gurton's Needle* by many years, and which possesses even stronger claims to the designation of a 'regular' comedy. We allude to *Ralph Roister Doister*, which was written by Nicholas Udall; and on the same authority which supplies his name, we know, beyond the possibility of doubt, that the play was in existence in 1551.¹ Udall died in 1565, having first been Master of Eton, and afterwards of Westminster schools,² and it is most likely that *Ralph Roister Doister* was the production of comparative youth: if so, the date when it was written might be carried back to the reign of Henry VIII; and in 1532, Udall was engaged, in conjunction with Leland, in penning a sort of dramatic pageant to celebrate the entrance of Anne Boleyn

¹ Thos. Wilson's *Rule of Reason* was first printed by R. Grafton in 1551, and in it a letter of Ralph Roister Doister to his mistress is quoted as 'an example of such doubtful writing, which by reason of pointing may have a double sense and contrary meaning, taken out of an interlude made by Nicholas Udall.'

² Warton (*H. E. P.*, iii, 213, 8vo.) thus speaks of Udall. 'Among the writings of Udall, a celebrated master of Eton about the year 1540, are recited *plures Comediæ*, and a tragedy *de Papatu*, on the papacy, written probably to be acted by his scholars. An extract from one of his Comedies may be seen in Wilson's *Logike*. In the ancient Consuetudinary, as it is called, of Eton School, the following passage occurs:—*Circa festum divi Andreæ ludimagister eligere solet, pro suo arbitrio, scenicas fabulas optimas et accommodatissimas, quas pueri feriis natalitiis subsequentibus, non sinè ludorum elegantia, populo spectante, publicè aliquando peragant. Interdum etiam exhibet Anglico sermone contextas fabulas, si quæ habeant acumen et leporem.* That is: about the feast of St. Andrew, the thirtieth day of November, the master is accustomed to chuse, according to his own discretion, such Latin stage-plays as are most excellent and convenient, which the boys are to act in the following Christmas holidays before a public audience, and with the elegance of scenery and ornaments usual at the performance of a play. Yet he may sometimes order English plays; such at least as are smart and witty.'

into London, after her marriage.¹ Something like a proof of its early date is contained in the two following lines from the

¹ In the *Royal MS.*, 18 A, lxiv, it is thus entitled:—‘Here after ensuethe a copie of divers and sundry verses, aswell in Latin as in Englishe, devised and made partely by Ihon Leland, and partely by Nicholas Vuedale: whereof sum were sette up, and some other were spoken and pronounced unto the most highe and excellent Queene the ladie Anne, wif unto our Soverain lorde King Henry the eight, in many goodly and costely pageauntes, exhibited and shewed by the Mayre and citizens of the famous citie of London.’ As a specimen of Udall’s part of the performance, the following extravagantly complimentary dialogue may be taken.

‘At the litle counduite in Chepe side was exhibited the Jugement of Paris, in maner and fourme folowing:—

Mercurie.—Juppiter this aple unto the hath sent,
Commaunding in this cause to geve true jugement.

Paris.—Juppiter a straunge office hath geven me,
To juge whiche is fairest of these ladies three.

Juno.—All riches and kingdomes bee at my behest:
Give me the aple, and thou shalt have the best.

Pallas.—Adjuge it to me, and for a kingdome
I shall geve incomparable wisdom.

Venus.—Preferre me, and I shall rewarde the, Paris,
With the fairest ladie that on the erthe is.

Paris.—I should breke Juppiter’s high commaundement,
If I should for mede or rewarde geve jugement.
Therefore, ladie Venus, before both these twain,
Your beautie moche exceding, by my sentence
Shall win and have this aple. Yet, to bee plain,
Here is the fouerthe ladie, now in presence,
Moste worthie to have it of due congruence,
As pereles in riches, wit, and beautie,
Whiche ar but sundrie qualities in you three;
But for hir worthynes this aple of gold
Is to symple a rewarde a thousand fold.’

The same obvious point occurs as a compliment to Queen Elizabeth in 1566, in ‘an oration made and pronounced by Mr. Pownd of Lincolnes Inne, in

comedy itself, where a servant of the hero (after whom the play is named) is describing a few of his master's amorous qualifications.

‘Of songs and balades also he is a maker,
And that can he as finely doe as Jacke Raker.’

This person is mentioned, as if in his ‘songs and ballads’ he were not remarkable for his adherence to truth, by Skelton in his satire on Wolsey, *Why come ye not to Court*, and Skelton was dead in 1533. His words are these:—

‘What here ye of the lord Dakers?
He maketh us all Jacke Rakers;
He says we are but crakers.’

At all events, when Udall wrote *Ralph Roister Doister*, the memory of Jack Raker was still fresh; and we can hardly suppose that the reputation of a man, now known only on these two authorities, would be very permanent.

a maske at the marriage of the Earle of Sussex’, in *MSS. Rawlinson Poet.* 108, in the Bodleian Library. It was also used, for the purpose of gratifying the vanity of the maiden queen, at the close of Peele’s *Arraignement of Paris*, 1584. At this date Elizabeth, never very engaging, was fifty-one years old; but nothing can place her personal conceit in a more ridiculous light, than the following extract from the Registers of the Privy Council, dated 30th July 1596, when she was twelve years older, and when her ministers, for the second time, were called upon gravely to interpose their authority to put an end to the distribution of likenesses of the Queen, offensive to her vanity.

‘30 July 1596.—A warrant to her Majesties Sergeant Painter, and to all publicke officers, to yelde him their assistance touching the abuse, committed by divers unskillfull artisans, in unseemly and improperly paintinge, gravinge, and printinge of hir Majesties person and vysage, to her Majesties great offence, and disgrace of that beautyfull and magnanimous majesty wherewith God hath blessed her. Requiring them to cause all suche to be defaced, and none to be allowed, but such as her Majesties Sergeant Paynter shall first have sight of. The mynute remayning in the Counsell Chest.’

Ralph Roister Doister has fortunately come down to us in a printed shape, although it is now not possible to settle from whose press it issued. In 1566, Thomas Hacket had a licence to print a 'play, intituled *Rauf Ruyster Duster*', and a copy, probably from his press, but without a title-page (so that the printer's name cannot be ascertained), was discovered in 1818,¹ and, after a limited reprint had been made of it, the original was deposited in the library of Eton College.² That such a piece once had existence has been long known, and the allusions to it in later authors afford evidence of its popularity.³ On

¹ What other liberties the printer took with the text we know not, but he makes one of the characters, Matthew Merrygreek, talk of keeping 'the *Queen's* peace'. As the comedy was unquestionably written in the time of Henry VIII, or Edward VI, it must have stood in the MS. of Udall, 'the *King's* peace'. Perhaps Hacket [?] composed from some copy of the play, as it was performed early in the reign of Elizabeth, in which the actors had made the change, in order to adapt the dialogue to the period of representation.

² There was a singular propriety in presenting it to Eton College, as Udall had been master of the school. This circumstance was, however, fortuitous, for at the time the reprint was superintended by the gentleman who made the gift, he was ignorant of the name of the author of *Ralph Roister Doister*: he says in the 'Advertisement'—'the book unfortunately wants the title-page, and the author's name is not known.' When the Rev. Dr. Bliss inserted the quotation found in Wilson's *Rule of Reason*, in the new edition of Wood's *Ath. Oxon.*, he was not aware that it was taken from *Ralph Roister Doister*.

³ Rafe Roister is a character in Ulpian Fullwell's *Like will to Like*, 1568 and 1587; and a 'roister-doister' is used proverbially by G. Harvey in his *Four Letters*, etc., 1592, for a mad-brained fellow.

'Then *roister-doister* in his oily terms', is a line applied to Marston, in *The Return from Parnassus*, 1606. The name of Mumblecrust, which is given in *Ralph Roister Doister* to an old female character, was subsequently employed in Dekker's *Satiro-mastix*, 1602, and in the *Pleasant Comedy of Patient Grissell*, 1603. It would not be difficult to multiply these references.

account of the station this most ancient and pure comedy ought unquestionably to hold in our dramatic literature, it will be necessary to examine it with particularity.

In his *Rule of Reason* Wilson terms it 'an interlude', and in the prologue, of four seven-line stanzas, the author himself calls it a 'comédie or enterlude'. Interlude, at that date, was the ordinary appellation for a dramatic entertainment, so that in employing also the more unusual word 'comedy', Udall seems to lay in his claim to have his production considered in the light of a play of a more regular and classical construction, referring at the same time to Plautus and Terence, as precedents which he had endeavoured to imitate: he says in his Prologue—

'The wyse poets, long time heretofore,
Under merrie comedies secretes did declare,
Wherein was contained very vertuous lore,
With mysteries and forewarnings very rare.
Such to write neither Plautus nor Terence did spare,
Which among the learned at this day beares the bell:
These with such other therein dyd excell.

'Our Comedie or Enterlude, which we intende to play,
Is named *Royster Doyster* in deede;
Which against the vayne glorious doth invey,
Whose humour the roysting sort continually doth feede.
Thus, by your patience, we intende to proceade
In this our Enterlude, by God's leave and grace:
And here I take my leave for a certain space.'

The scene of the comedy is laid in London, so that in no slight degree it is a representation of the manners of more select society, exhibiting some of the peculiarities of thinking and acting in the metropolis at the period when it was written: in this respect it has a decided advantage over *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, which only pretends to depict the

habits of coarse, rustic life. *Ralph Roister Doister* is divided into acts and scenes, and is one of the earliest productions for the stage which have reached us in a printed shape, with these distinctions: the characters are thirteen, nine male and four female, and the performance could not have been concluded in less time than about two hours and a half, while few of the *Morals* we have examined would require more than about an hour for their representation: of those that are in two parts, each part, as has been observed, was usually exhibited on a separate day.

Matthew Merrygreek (a sort of servant, companion, and relative to Ralph Roister Doister, the hero), opens the play, and enters singing: in a soliloquy he explains his own qualities and those of his patron, dwelling especially on the vanity and amorousness of the latter. Ralph Roister Doister joins him, lamenting that God had made him 'such a goodly person', and that he had fallen in love with Christian Custance, 'the faire woman that supped with us yesternyght', but whose name he cannot at first remember: she is a gay widow, as Ralph observes, with 'a thousand and more', to which Merrygreek replies—

'Yea, but learne this one lesson of me afore:
An hundred ponde of marriage money, doubtlesse,
Is ever thirtie ponde sterlyng, or somewhat lesse;
So that her thousande ponde, yf she be thriftie,
Is much neere aboute two hundred and fiftie.'

Ralph's principal cause of grief is, that he has a rival in a merchant of the name of Gawin Goodluck, to whom he hears Dame Custance is promised: Matthew consoles him by dilating on the excellence of his figure, which may command the love of any woman, observing that as he passes along the street people admire him, and think him Lancelot du Lake,

Guy of Warwick, 'the thirteenth Hercules brother', Hector of Troy, Goliah, Sampson, Colbrand, 'Brute of the Alie lande', Alexander the Great, Charlemaine, or the tenth worthy. Ralph greedily swallows all these praises, and promises Matthew a new coat. After they have done talking and Merrygreek has gone out, Madge Mumblecrust, who is spinning, Tibet Talkapace, who is sewing, and Annot Alyface, who is knitting, come upon the stage and converse about the good fare allowed them by their mistress, Dame Christian Cus-tance. They then sing, while Ralph overhears them; after which Alice goes out, and returns just as Ralph has kissed the old nurse, Madge, and wishes to kiss Tibet, who is a little coy: Ralph and Madge, being left together, he tells her how much he loves her mistress. Matthew Merrygreek returns with Dobinet Doughty and Harpax (two of Ralph Roister Doister's retainers and singing men), just as Ralph is telling Madge 'a great long tale in her eare', and they pretend for some time to mistake the old nurse for the lady of Roister Doister's love. Ralph is at first very indignant, but forgives the blunder upon due submission, and they join in a very early song upon matrimony. It runs thus:—

'Who so to marry a minion wyfe
Hath made good chance and happe,
Must love and cherishe her all his life,
And dandle her in his lappe.

'If she will fare well, yf she wyll go gay,
A good husband ever styll,
What euer she lust to doe or to say,
Must lette hir have hir owne will.

'About what affaires soever he goe,
He must showe hir all his mynde;
None of hys counsell she may be kept froe,
Else he is a man unkynde.'

They 'go out singing', leaving old Madge to give her mistress (who comes in just afterwards) a letter which Ralph had left for her, and which Dame Custance receives, but does not then open. This forms the business of the first act of this bustling and lively comedy.

A night passes before the second act, in the opening of which Dobinet Doughty brings 'a ring and a token' for Dame Custance from his Master: Dobinet dilates on the hard lives of servants and singers, when their masters are in love—

'So fervent hotte wowyng [wooing] and so farre from wiving,
I trowe, never was any creature livyng :
With every woman is he in some loves pang,
Then up to our lute at midnight, twangledome twang ;
Then twang with our sonets, and twang with our dumps,
And heyhough ! from our heart, as heavy as lead lumpes :
Then to our recorder with toodleoodle poope,
As the howlet out of an yvie bushe should hoope.
Anon to our gitterne, thrumpledum, thrumpledum thrum,
Of songs, and balades also he is a maker,
And that can he as finely doe as Jacke Raker.'

Old Madge, having been scolded by her mistress on the preceding day, for taking Ralph's letter, refuses to deliver the 'ring and token' to her: but Truepenny (Dame Custance's man), Tibet, and Annot entering, Dobinet introduces himself to them, as a messenger from their mistress's intended husband, without mentioning who that intended husband is. They are delighted with the prospect of a change in the family, and Tibet Talkapace observes—

'I would it were tomorrowe ; for till he resorte,
Our mistresse, being a widowe, hath small comforte ;
And I hearde our Nourse speake of an husbande to day
Ready for our mistresse, a riche man and a gay :

And we shall go in our Frenche hoodes every day,
 In our silke cassocks (I warrant you) freshe and gay ;
 In our tricke ferdegews and billiments of golde,
 Brave in our sutes of chaunge seven double folde.
 Then shall ye see Tibet, sirs, treade the mosse so trimme ;
 Nay, why sayd I treade ? ye shall se hir glide and swimme,
 Not lumpерdee, clumperdee, like our spaniel Rig.'

After another song, of no great merit, they almost quarrel which shall deliver Ralph's 'ring and token' to Dame Custance. Tibet snatches them and runs away, while the others go out ; and in the next scene we find Dame Custance blaming Tibet and the rest for indiscretion in receiving rings and tokens without knowing from whom they come. Here the second act ends, which is short, and does not much advance the plot.

Matthew Merrygreek is sent at the beginning of Act iii to see how the land lies, and how the ring and token work. He is brought before Dame Custance, from whom he learns that she is engaged to the merchant, Gawin Goodluck, that she will never consent to marry Ralph Roister Doister, and that she has not even read his letter. The following is part of their equivocal conversation—

C. Custance.—I am promised during my life : that is just.

M. Mery.—Mary, so thinketh he, unto him alone.

C. Custance.—No creature hath my faith and trouth, but one,
 That is Gawin Goodlucke ; and if it be not hee,
 He hath no tittle this way, what ever he be ;
 For I knowe none to whome I have such worde spoken.

M. Mery.—Ye know him not you by his letter and token ?

C. Custance.—In dede, true it is that a letter I have,
 But I never reade it yet, as God me save.

M. Mery.—Ye a woman, and your letter so long unredde ?

C. Custance.—Ye may thereby know what haste I have to wedde.
 But now who it is ? for the hande I knowe by gesse.

M. Mery.—Ah, well, I say.

C. Custance.—It is Roister Doister doubtlesse.

M. Mery.—Will ye never leave this dissimulation?

Ye know hym not?

C. Custance.—But by imagination;

For no man there is but a very dolt and loute,

That to wowe a widowe woulde so go about.

He shall never have me hys wife while he doe live.'

Merrygreek then returns to his master and 'cousin', Ralph, with the tidings that Dame Custance will have nothing to say to him, but abuses him for 'a calf, an ass, a block, a lilburn, a hoball, and a lobcock'. Ralph, mortified and disappointed, is ready to faint, and declares that he will die on the spot; and, to carry on the joke, Merrygreek pretends that Ralph is really dying, and calls in the parish-clerk, and four others, to sing and ring a mock *requiem* over him. However, Merrygreek recovers Ralph soon afterwards, and advises him to put a good bold face upon the business, and to go to the Dame himself and demand her hand, making his approaches first by a serenade. Ralph agrees to this plan, and dame Custance enters while they are singing and playing. Ralph declares his passion, which she scornfully rejects, producing the letter he had sent her, which Merrygreek reads,—so neglecting and varying the punctuation, that it has 'a double sense and quite contrary meaning'; and Roister Doister, not recognising the composition, denies it to be his. The lady leaves them, and Merrygreek descants on the variety, folly, vanity, and perverseness of women—

'When ye will, they will not; will not ye, then will they.'

He consoles Ralph again by praising his parts and person, and by wishing he was a woman for his sake: he advises him to 'refrain from Custance a while', which, he asserts, will soon

bring her creeping on her knees to him. Roister Doister consents, and in the meantime vows to take vengeance on the Scrivener whom he had employed to copy the letter for him. The Scrivener, being sent for, reads it with due observance of the stops, and his employer is compelled to acknowledge that a better epistle for the purpose could hardly have been penned.

The fourth act introduces us to some new personages. The first is Sim Suresby, who has been sent by his master, Gawin Goodluck, to salute Dame Custance on his return from a long voyage. While they are in conversation, Ralph Roister Doister and Matthew Merrygreek arrive, the former giving loud directions for the preparation of his arms and armour in case he should need them for a rival. He impudently calls Dame Custance his 'wife and spouse', and Sim Suresby goes out (under the impression that in fact they are married), to inform his master, Goodluck, of what seems to have happened during his absence at sea. Ralph says, just as Sim is departing—

'Yea, farewell, fellow ; and tell thy maister, Goodlucke,
That he commeth to late of thys blossome to plucke.
Let him keepe him there still, or at least wise make no hast,
As for his labour hither he shall spende in wast.
His betters be in place nowe.'

Dame Custance, in grief and anger that Ralph has thus 'stained her name for ever', calls forth her maids and her man Truepenny to drive out Ralph and his follower, who prudently and precipitately retreat, threatening to return. She sends for a friend named Tristram Trusty to advise her ; and Merrygreek entering, declares that he has only joined with Ralph Roister Doister for the sake of mirth, and to make him ridiculous. He tells them that Ralph is about to return to the assault 'with a sheepe's looke full grim', and Custance undertakes 'to

pitch a field with her maids' for his reception. In the next scene, which is one of mere broad farce, Ralph Roister Doister, armed with kitchen utensils and a pot-gun, and attended by Merrygreek, Dobinet Doughty, and Harpax, threatens to destroy all with merciless fire and sword. He declares his wrongs to Tristram Trusty, who remarks—

‘Well yet the sheriffe, the justice or constable,
Hir misdemeanour to punishe might be able.

R. Royster.—No, sir; I mine owne selfe will, in this present cause,
Be sheriffe and justice and whole judge of the lawes.
This matter to amende all officers be I shall,
Constable, Bailiffe, Sergeant.

M. Mery.—And hangman and all.’

The conclusion of this adventure, and of the act, is that Dame Custance and her maids (with the aid of Matthew Merrygreek, who pretends to fight on the side of Ralph, but in the scuffle belabours him soundly) drive off their assailants at point of the mop and broom.

Gawin Goodluck and his man Sim Suresby commence the fifth act, the latter telling the former what he had witnessed regarding the supposed infidelity of Dame Custance. She arrives, and wishing to welcome Gawin affectionately, he draws back until the matter is explained. She protests her innocence, and refers him to her friend Trusty: Gawin and Sim go out to seek him, and she soliloquizes on the danger and misconstruction to which innocence is exposed:

‘O Lorde ! how necessarie it is, nowe of dayes,
That eche bodie live uprightly all maner wayes ;
For lette never so little a gappe be open,
And be sure of this, the worst shall be spoken,
How innocent stande I in this for deede or thought,
And yet see what mistrust towardes me it hath wrought !

But thou, Lorde, knowest all folke's thoughts and eke intents,
And thou arte the deliverer of all innocentes.'

After she has referred to the manner in which Susannah and Hester in holy writ were delivered from their perils, Gawin Goodluck and Sim Suresby return with Tristram Trusty, who has satisfactorily explained all the circumstances, and Gawin receives his betrothed wife with joy. Merrygreek comes in with humble suit from Ralph Roister Doister, that what was past should be forgiven, and they consent to take him into favour, Merrygreek observing of Ralph,

'Why, such a foole it is,
As no man for good pastime would forgoe or misse.'

He carries the tidings to Ralph; and still flatters him by assuring him that Gawin and his friends were heartily glad to be reconciled, being in deadly fear for their lives from his vexation and fury. The comedy ends with an invitation of Ralph to the wedding supper, and with an epilogue, which is sung, and in which the performers pray for the Queen, the church, and the nobility. This must have been added when the play was revived, after Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558, as it could not have originally belonged to it.

This sketch will show, that in almost every respect *Ralph Roister Doister* is superior to *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, of which the whole plot relates merely to the loss of a needle, with which an old woman was mending an ignorant and stupid countryman's breeches; which needle is afterwards found by its incommoding the seat of the person upon whose apparel it had been employed. The characters there are all rustics, with the exception of 'Diccon the Bedlam', Dr. Rat and the Bailey; and what is said is usually in the broadest provincial dialect, not in any respect exhibiting a specimen of the ordinary language of the time. It now and then has humour, but

of the coarsest kind; and sometimes points which are pleasant in the outset are rendered absurd by being carried to extremes. Thus the description of Hodge, trying to light a candle by the cat's eyes in the dark, and endeavouring to blow them into a flame, is laughable enough, until he is made to give the alarm of fire, because the animal ran away into the hay-loft. This was just beyond the bound, though still a pleasant exaggeration. The drinking song which opens the second act¹ is certainly the best thing in it, and all that Warton could say in favour of the piece as a whole was, 'the writer has a degree of jocularitv, which sometimes rises above buffoonery, but is often disgraced by lowness of incident'.

On the other hand, the plot of *Ralph Roister Doister* is amusing and well constructed, with an agreeable intermixture of serious and comic dialogue, and a variety of character, to which no other piece of a similar date can make pretension. When we recollect, that it was possibly written in the reign of Henry VIII (Udall died in 1557), we ought to look upon it as a masterly production: had it followed *Gammer Gurton's Needle* by as many years as it preceded it, it would have been entitled to our admiration on its own separate merits, independent of any comparison with other pieces. The character of Matthew Merrygreek here and there savours of the Vice or Jester of the Morals, but his humour never depends upon the accidents of dress and accoutrements.

Gammer Gurton's Needle is reprinted in *Dodsley's Old Plays*, and is also to be found in Hawkins's *Origin of the English Drama*; it is therefore not necessary to go farther into the general discussion of its merits: for the sake of completeness, however, it is fit to extract a short specimen of the dialogue, that some notion may be formed of Still's language and versification. What follows is from Act ii, Scene 3,

¹ Quoted by Warton at length, *H. E. P.*, iv, 32.

'Diccon the Bedlam' commencing with a short address to the audience, referring to his plot, or devise, as regards the lost needle.

Diccon.—Ye see, masters, the one end tapt of this my short devise,
Now must we broche tother to[o], before the smoke arise ;
And by the time they have a while run, I trust ye need not crave it,
But loke what lieth in both their harts, ye are like sure to have it.

Hodge.—Yea, gogs soul, art alive yet? What, Diccon, dare ich come?¹

Diccon.—A man is well hied to trust to thee : I wil say nothing but
mum :

But and ye come any nearer, I pray you, see all be sweete.

Hodge.—Tush, man ! is gammer's neele found? that chould gladly weete.

Diccon.—She may thanke thee it is not found, for if thou had kept thy standing

The devil he wold have fet it out, evn Hodg at thy commaunding.

Hodge.—Gogs hart, and cold he tel nothing wher the neele might be found?

Diccon.—Ye foolysh dolt, ye were to seek, ear we had got our ground ;
Therefore his tale so doubtfull was, that I cold not perceive it.

Hodge.—Then ich se wel somthing was said, chope² one day yet to have it.

But, Diccon, Diccon, did not the devill cry, *ho, ho, ho*?

Diccon.—If thou hadst taryed where thou stoodst, thou woldest have said so.

Hodge.—Durst swere of a boke chard him rore, streight after ich was gon.

But tell me, Diccon, what said the knave? let me here it anon.

¹ Diccon has been pretending to have had an interview with the devil for the recovery of the needle.

² 'Chope' is *Ich hope*, *i. e.*, I hope : Just as below we have 'chard' for *Ich heard*: above we have had 'chould' for *I should*.

Diccon.—The horson talked to mee, I know not well of what :
 One whyle his tonge it ran and paltered of a cat ;
 Another whyle he stammered styll upon a rat ;
 Last of all there was nothing but every word chat, chat.
 But this I well perceyved before I wolde him rid,
 Betweene chat and the rat and the cat the nedle is hyd.
 Now whether Gyb, our cat, have eate it in her mawe,
 Or doctor Rat, our curat, have found it in the straw,
 Or this dame Chat, your neighbour, have stollen it, god hee
 knoweth,
 But by the morrow at this time, we shall learn how the matter
 goeth.

Hodge.—Canst not learn to night, man ? Seest not what is here ?
 [*Pointyng behind to his torne breeches.*]

Diccon.—Tys not possyble to make it sooner appere.

Hodge.—Alas, Diccon ! then chave no shyft ; but least ich tary to
 longe,

Hye me to Sym glovers shop, theare to seeke for a thonge,
 Ther with this breech to tatche and tye as ich may.

Diccon.—To morrow, Hodg, if we chaunce to meete, shall see what I
 will say.'

It is perhaps to be regretted that Still did not apply his dramatic talents to a better subject ; and we cannot entirely agree with Warton that many indecencies and grossnesses with which his play abounds arose out of want of polish in the age. At least *Ralph Roister Doister*, so much older, is remarkably free from them, and it is doubtful whether in London, in this respect, people were much more refined than in the country. *Gammer Gurton's Needle* has this peculiarity belonging to it, that it is, we believe, the first existing English play acted at either University ; and it is a singular coincidence (which is farther illustrated in the *Annals of the Stage*), that the author of the comedy so represented was the very person who, many years afterwards, when he had become Vice-Chancellor

of Cambridge, was called upon to remonstrate with the ministers of Queen Elizabeth against having an English play performed before her at the University, as unbefitting its learning, dignity, and character.

Taking it for granted that *Gammer Gurton's Needle* was acted at Cambridge in 1566, it is tolerably certain that it was preceded by another production, belonging decidedly to the class of comedy, and which is a MS. of recent discovery. It is called *Misogonus*, and it appears to have been written by a person of the name of Thomas Rychardes, whose name is appended to the prologue. The first page bears the name also of Laurentius Bariōna,¹ and the date 'Ketteringe, Die 20 Novembris, Anno 1577'. It was unquestionably written many years earlier, as is established, among others, by the following piece of internal evidence: a question arises when one of the principal characters, named Eugenius, was born, and Crito, another person in the play, desires three old women who had been present at the birth, and a countryman, the husband of one of them, 'to lay all their heads together', in order to decide the point, which is material to the plot: after doing so, the countryman replies—

'It were after the *rising rection i'th north*, I remember well ;'

in which the others agree, and hence they find that Eugenius was 'twenty and four' years old. The great Insurrection in the North occurred in 1536, and, adding twenty-four years, the age of the young man, to that date, it would give 1560 or a little after, as the time when *Misogonus* was first produced. We shall analyse this piece with minuteness, on account of its age, its construction, and its general merits as a drama, independent of the consideration that it has never before been

¹ He seems to have adopted the Italian poet Trissino's peculiarity of using the Greek ω in spelling, for the sake of emphasis.

mentioned. It is to be lamented that this valuable relic is in a very mutilated state, and that the whole of the last act (for it is regularly divided and subdivided) is wanting.

The scene is laid in Italy; but as a picture of manners and peculiarities in England at the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth it is excellent, and the allusions to circumstances well known at the time it was written are frequent. The characters are twelve in number, and many of the names given to them are of Greek or Latin composition, indicative of the habits and dispositions of the persons: they are so arranged that the comedy could be performed by ten players. One peculiarity presents itself in the very commencement—the prologue was spoken by an actor in the character of Homer, with a wreath of bays round his head—¹

‘Yow that are here moste excellente, and yow moste honeste auditors,

Thinke not I have the lorrell bowes or ivy berryes gotte,
That I shoulde vaunte my selfe to be like to Apollo’s oratours:
To speake in breif I thinke it best, of truth I ment it not.
Yf any ask, then, why I decke my temples thus with bayse,
Or why this garlande here I ware, not being Laureate?
Forsooth, I come in Homers hewe our historye forth to blase,
As custome is and ever was: well marke therof the state.’

He then proceeds in the following terms to give the outline of the plot—

‘Whilum there in Laurentum dwelt, a towne of antike fame
In Italye, a countrey earst renounde with Trojane knightes,
A gentleman, whome lott assinde Philogonus to name:
Of this man’s destinies this tyme our author onely writes.

¹ It was not unusual for the speaker of the prologue to wear bays or laurel, and in the accounts of the Revels before Queen Elizabeth, we read entries of a charge for ‘bays for the prologue’.

'In lusty youth a wife he tooke, a dame of florishinge grene,
Who sone after conceavde and brought him forth at once two
twinnes :

Theldest she sente away, wherof hir husbände did not wene.
Forthwith she died : at thother sonne our comody begins.

'Through wanton educatione he gann to be contempteous,
And sticked not with tauntinge tearmes his father to miscall ;
And straightway in lacivious luste he waxed so licentious,
That father he did often vex, and brought him to great thrall.

'By luckkye lot yet at the lengthe his eldest sonne he knewe,
And that he might his comforte be, sent for him in great hast :
Then after this the yonger sonne his life doth leade anewe,
Withat together all the[y] joy, and bankett at the last.'

It will be evident, therefore, that the structure of the piece is simple, and the prologue duly apologises for 'the rude and homely grace' of the language, as well as for want of practice in the actors.

The comedy opens with a long scene between Philogonus and his friend and neighbour Eupelas, in which the former relates to the latter his marriage, the birth of a son, and the subsequent death of the mother: he also states the manner in which he had spoiled the boy, and neglected his education, until he grew up past correction and instruction, adding

'A company of knaves he hath also on his hande,
Which leades him to all manner leaudnes apace,
With harlots and varlots and baudes he is mande :
To the gallouse, I feare, he is treadinge the trace.'

The whole play is in stanzas of this form and measure. Eupelas, in his turn, comforts his friend, and tells him 'to pluck up his heart', and not to despair, as his son, named Misogonus, would be sure to reform in time. He undertakes to reason with the young man on the subject of his mis-

conduct, but Philogonus warns him to be careful how he proceeds in so hopeless an undertaking :

‘ An endlesse laboure you then go aboute.
Can you bende a bigge tree which is sappy and sound ?
He is to[o] olde, I tell yow, to stubberne and to stoute :
Take hede what you say, lest he lay you on the ground.’

Eupelas nevertheless determines to persevere in his attempt to reclaim Misogonus ; and while they are yet conversing, Cacurgus (who is described as *Morio* in the list of characters) enters to call his ‘founder’ to supper. Cacurgus is the domestic fool of the family, and this drama contains a more distinct representation of the nature and qualities of this sort of personage than is to be found, perhaps, in any of our old plays. Before his master, he usually pretends to be a mere simpleton, and to talk a broad country dialect, but at other times he is full of all kinds of shrewdness, mischief, and waggery. There is another circumstance in his character that deserves remark : although his name is Cacurgus, he is constantly called, and he calls himself, Will Summer, as if the celebrity of the Court-fool of Henry VIII had led to the assignment of his name to domestic fools in private families. The two old gentlemen leave him on the stage ; and after a not very decent song, in which he laughs at them both, Cacurgus (the Vice) thus addresses himself to the audience.

‘ Yow may perceive what I am, so much I doe laughe :
A foole, you knowe, can kepe no measure ;
My master is Waltum, and I Waltum’s calfe :
A foole in laughture puttethe all his pleasure.

‘ A foole (quoth yow), nay he is no foole.
Did yow not see what pittye he did take ?
He is able to sett your doctoures to schole ;
No smale poynt of wisdom for me such gere to make.’

He enlarges upon the extravagance and vices of his young master, and ends by giving away the points, or fastenings, of his dress among the audience.

‘ But before I goe hence, Ile bestowe some of my poynts ;
Come of with a vengeaunce ! here is prety toyes.
What Will, what Dick, be hanged, stirr your joynts !
What, will yow none ? take them, then, boyes.

‘ As for my pinnes, Ile bestowe them of Jone,
When wee sitt by the fier and rost a crabb.
She and I have good sporte when we are all alone :
By the mas ! I may say to yow, she is an honest drabb.

‘ Nothings greves me but my yeares [ears] be so longe,
My master will take me for Balames asse.
Yf I can, Ile tye them downe with a thonge,
Yf not, I will tell him I have [am] good kinge Midas.’

Misogonus then enters blusteringly, and at first threatens to kill Cacurgus, but they soon get into familiar conversation, and Misogonus tells the fool that he is ‘as full of knaverie, as an egg is full of meate’. Cacurgus informs Misogonus how much he is in his master’s favour, and that he had heard Philogonus tell Eupelas that his son was ‘a parlousse unthriftye ladde’. When Misogonus learns from Cacurgus, that Eupelas is about to take him in hand, he falls into a furious rage, and exclaims—

‘ By his soule and syds, by his death and his life,
Ile make the olde churle repente this talke.’

Cacurgus proposes that Misogonus should collect his servants while he sent out Eupelas to them, and that they should then fall upon him. Misogonus calls his man Orgalus, who is busied in brushing his master’s ‘velvet gaskins’: they stand aside, and when Eupelas enters, they rush out upon him, and the first act ends with the escape of Eupelas.

The second act commences with the abuse by Misogonus of his servant Orgalus, for allowing Eupelas to escape. Oenophilus, another servant, explains, that he could not come in time to assist, because he had been obliged to leave his 'livery coat' of good 'spanish cloth' in pawn for some 'ginger bowles' he had been drinking with a fellow, who had afterwards picked his pocket, and run away. Misogonus calls him 'a disardly dronkerd and besillinge beast'; and while beating him Cacurgus arrives, and entreats Misogonus to desist 'in the Queen's name', but receives a blow in reply. Oenophilus acknowledges that he deserved what had been inflicted upon him, and declares that his master exceeds 'the nine worthies'. Misogonus forgives him, and the more readily, as Oenophilus promises to take him hunting, what he humorously calls, 'two legged venison'.

Oen.—Ile bringe ye to a morsell that is tender and dentye :

She is not so much as my spann in hir wast.

Cac.—By the mas ! I know hir, she is a good smogly lace ;

She, a hundred tymes better than any French rigg.

Mis.—Give me thy hand : thoust have a house, and bringe this to passe.

I woulde aske no more of hir but on [one] Scottish jigge.'

Misogonus is in a hurry to be at the sport, but the rest insist upon having a song first, and they sing the following, 'to the tune of heart's ease'; which, recollecting that it was written about the year 1560, may be pronounced quite as good, in its kind, as the spirited drinking song in *Gammer Gurton's Needle*.

'Singe care away with sport and playe,

Pastime is all our pleasure :

Yf well we fare, for nought we care,

In mearth consists our treasure.

- ‘ Let lungis¹ lurke and drudges worke,
 We doe defie their slaverye :
 He is but a foole that goes to schole ;
 All we delight in braverye.
- ‘ What doth’t availe farr hence to saile,
 And lead our life in toylinge ?
 Or to what end shoulde we here spende
 Our dayes in irksome moylinge ?
- ‘ It is the best to live at rest,
 And tak’t as God doth send it ;
 To haunt ech wake and mirth to make,
 And with good fellowes spend it.
- ‘ Nothing is worse than a full purse
 To niggards and to pinchers :
 They alwais spare and live in care ;
 Ther’s no man loves such flinchers.
- ‘ The merye man with cupp and cann
 Lives longer then doth twentye :
 The misers wealth doth hurt his health,
 Examples wee have plentye.
- ‘ Tza [’Tis a] beastly thinge to lie musinge
 With pensivenes and sorrowe ;
 For who can tell that he shall well
 Live here until the morowe.
- ‘ We will therfore for evermore
 While this our life is lastinge,
 Ete, drinke, and sleepe, and lemans keepe,
 ’Tis *poperie* to use fastinge.

¹ *Lungis*, a word used by Ben Jonson and others, is mis-written *Sungis* in the MS. *Lungis* are stupid, clumsy people.

‘ In cards and dice, our comforte lies,
 In sportinge and in dauncinge,
 Our minds to please and live at ease,
 And sometimes to use praunsinge.
 ‘ With Bes and Nell we love to dwell
 In kissinge and in ha[w]kinge ;
 But whope hoe, hollie, with trollye lollye !
 To them weil now be walking.’

They leave the fool behind them, who stands aside and speaks to himself, while Liturgus, an honest old servant to Philogonus, relates how Misogonus had treated Eupelas. Cacurgus says, among other things :

‘ Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha ! I must needs laughe in my slefe :
 The wise men of Gotum are risen againe.¹
 Peter Poppum doth make his master beleive
 That Misogonus, his sonne, hath Eupelas slayne.’

When Liturgus has gone out to inquire after the health of Eupelas, Cacurgus comes forward, assuming his character of a rustic simpleton, and from what he says, we may conclude that such was the peculiarity of Will Summer, King Harry’s famous jester :

‘ Ha, ha ! now will I goe playe Will Sommer agayne,
 And seme as verie a gose as I was before.’

The old gentleman pulls the points off his own hose to give them as a reward to Cacurgus, who calls them ‘ding-dongs’, and rejoices that some of them have ‘golden noses’. They all go out, when Liturgus brings word that Eupelas is unhurt.

The next scene is a very amusing one, and a very severe

¹ According to Hearne (*Guil. Neubr.*, iii, 744), *The Merry Tales of the Mad Men of Gotham* were first published in the latter end of the reign of Henry VIII. They were collected by Andrew Borde ; but ‘the fooles of Gotham’ we have seen mentioned in Miracle-plays.

satire upon the Roman Catholic priesthood. Misogonus is represented disporting himself with Melissa (*meretrix*), and attended by his servants Orgalus and Oenophilus. After drinking 'muscadine', the lady proposes 'a cast at the bones'; but, as no dice can be found, Oenophilus suggests that Sir John, the parish-priest, should be sent for, who 'has not a drop of priest's blood in him', and is sure to be well furnished with cards and dice. He thus gives his character—

'He, Sir? I am sure he is not without a dosin pare of dice.
I durst jepert [hazard] he is now at cards or at tables :—
A bible? nay soft you, heile yet be more wise;
I tell yow heis none of this new start up rables.

'Thers no honest pastime but he puts it in ure,
Not one game can come upp but he has it bith' backe.
Every wench 'ith townes acquainted with his lure.
Its pittye (so god helpe me) that ever he shoulde lacke.'

Oenophilus is dispatched for him, and Cacurgus joins the party, surprised at first to see Misogonus with such 'a fare Mayde Marion', who is 'as good as brown Bessye'. Oenophilus soon brings Sir John, whom he found 'at the ale-house'. Cacurgus snatches the pack of cards the priest brought in his pocket, in order to play at 'ruff maw or saint', while the rest of the party take the dice to play at 'Mumchaunce, or Novum come quickly'. Sir John first stakes his gown upon a trick of legerdemain at cards, and the fool wins it; but 'the Vicar' is afterwards so successful with 'the bones', that they suspect he plays with 'some dise of vauntage'. His luck, however, changes; and in the midst of his play he hears the 'saunce bell goe ding dong', and the parish-clerk comes to fetch him to his church. He tells the clerk to do duty himself, by saying a *Magnificat* and a *Nunc dimittis*, and ending with the Creed, leaving out the Psalms and the *Paternoster*. Sir John is,

however, inclined to go himself when he hears that Susan Sweetlips is waiting for him ; but Cacurgus swears 'by tetragrammaton and the black santus' he will knock out his brains if he stirs. After some farther gambling they begin dancing 'country dances', and 'the Vicar of St. Fools', 'the shaking of the sheets', and 'catching of quails' are mentioned as three popular tunes. While they are thus engaged, Cacurgus, to make mischief, steals out and brings in Philogonus, Eupelas, and Liturgus to be spectators. An abusing match on all sides follows, Liturgus declaring 'there's no mischiefe, as they say commonly, but a priest at one end'. Misogonus and his companions go out at last, leaving Philogonus, Eupelas, and Liturgus on the stage : the two last endeavour in vain to console the unhappy father, and after they have made their exit, he delivers a 'doleful ditty to the noted tune of Labandoloshote', of which the following is one stanza—

'Yf Phœbus forst was to lament
When Phaeton fell from the element ;
Yf Dedalus did wale and wepe
When Icarus in seas was deepe ;
Yf Priamus had cause to crye
When all his sonnes were slayne in Troy,
Why should not I then, wofull wight,
Complain in a more piteous plight :
Myne doth not only him selfe undoo,
But me full oft doth worke great woo.'

The third act commences with a new character, Custer Codrus, a country tenant to Philogonus, who complains of having lost a sow, and who comes to town with a couple of capons, as a Christmas present to his landlord. Cacurgus cheats him of his capons, and substitutes two old hens for them ; but undertakes to bring him to speak with Philogonus

on the promise of 'a fine thing that cam from London¹ for his paine'. Codrus finds his old landlord in great grief at the misconduct of him whom he imagines to be his only son: Codrus gives Philogonus information that his late wife had produced twins, and that, in fact, he had another son alive: he promises to bring his wife Alison, who was present at the birth, to prove the fact, and Philogonus overjoyed exclaims—

'Ther never was poore mariner amids the surginge seas,
Catchinge a glimeringe of a port wherunto he would saile,
So much distract twixt hope of health and feare his life to lease,
As I even now with hope do hang, and eke with feare doe faile.'

Alison is now brought forward: she is a Roman Catholic, and talks of her bead-roll and of saying a *De profundis*, which induces Codrus to remind her that their 'master is of the new learning', that is to say, of the reformed religion. A long scene follows, in which Philogonus hears it confirmed by Alison that his wife had produced twins, and by the advice of 'a certain learned man', had sent one of them secretly away into Apolonia, to be brought up by an uncle and aunt. Cacurgus informs Misogonus what has transpired: Misogonus hopes it is 'but a tale of a tub', but, being informed that Liturgus had been sent into Apolonia for his elder brother, he threatens to 'colefeke'² him for it. He calls upon Cacurgus to advise and

¹ Farther on in the piece an allusion is made to the Weathercock of St. Paul's, which was almost a novelty at the time this play was written, as, according to Stow, it was put up on the 3rd of November 1553: Cacurgus, speaking of Codrus, says, 'that old dyzarde had no more witt then the wethercocke of Poles'. This also is decisive that the piece was written before 1561, in which year the spire of St. Paul's was burnt, and, of course, the weathercock. See Stow's *Chronicle*, 1095.

² The only other instance of the use of this word that we are aware of is in Richard Edwards's *Damon and Pythias*, which was written and played a few years after this piece: Stephano there tells Jack, 'Away, Jackenapes, els I wyll *colp heg* you by and by.' Steevens reasonably conjectured that it was a corruption of *colaphize*, box or buffet—*colfez*.

assist him, and the fool proposes to steal the deeds of the estates from Philogonus.

Isbel Busby and Madge Caro, who with Alison had been present when the twins were born, are next brought upon the stage. Madge, who stammers, is also troubled with the toothache; and they are encountered by Cacurgus, who pretends to be a great Egyptian, capable of curing all kinds of maladies. He makes a long speech, dilating on his own merits, to which Isbel and Madge listen with wonder, and after he has given the latter a mock prescription for her malady, including a 'dram of Venus-hair infidelity' and 'an ounce of popery', he intrigues with them to deny that Misogonus had an elder brother, persuading them that 'a fairy' had changed the child in the cradle. It does not seem that this project succeeds, for in the next scene Eugonus, the lost brother, arrives, and is recognised by Alison, Isbel, and Madge, Isbel declaring, that 'when her maistresse lay in, they sange *lulley by baby*'.¹ With the assistance of a person named Crito (who is described as *peregrinus*), they put circumstances together, and ripping open the hose of Eugonus, find that he has a toe too many on one of his feet, which was the case with the twin which had been sent into Apolonia. This proof is incontrovertible, that he is the same child who was born 'after the rising rection ith' north' twenty-four years before. Eugonus is then brought to Philogonus his father :

Phi.—O, welcome, my sonne !

Eug.—O, my father !

Phi.—O, my sonne !

Eug.—Blesse me, my father.

Phi.—God blesse the, my sonne.

Eternall god which onely guidst th'imperial pole aloft,

¹ See Ritson's *Ancient Songs*, new edit. i, lv, for the music of this old burden, from a MS. of the reigns of Richard II or Henry IV.

And also this terrestriall globe with all humaine affaires,
 Though frowninge fortune with his force doth tipe and tourne us oft,
 Thou canst miraculously helpe thy servaunts unawares.
 If twenty trumpes and twenty mouthes I had to sound thy praise,
 Or if I had kinge David's vaine, or Nester's eloquence,
 They would not serve me at this tyme due thankfulness to raise,
 Towards thee for thy unspeakable and wonderfull beneficence.—
 O welcome home, my sonne, my sonne, my comfort and my joy !
 Thou art the lengthner of my life, the curer of my care.
 Here of my house possession take, and all my lands enjoy.
 I thynke my selfe as happy now, as if a duke I wear.'

Misogonus, Orgalus, and Oenophilus, enter with weapons, and after some abuse and confusion they are left on the stage, when the servants of Misogonus, finding how the land lies, desert him. Misogonus, struck by their ingratitude, begins to repent his past life ; but before we arrive at his complete reformation, we have a singular scene, in which Cacurgus and the audience are concerned. The fool has been turned out of his place for his mal-practices, and after he has given this information to the spectators, he thus appeals to them :—

'What were I best to do now, Sirs ? which on yow can tell ?
 Is there any good body amonge ye will take me in for god sake ?
 And there be ere a gentleman here would have a foole with him
 dwell,
 Lett him speake : and a my worde a' shall a verye foole take.'

He urges them to 'take pity upon a stray fool', and asks if there be any crier among them : finding none, he himself, after an 'O-o-o-yes', makes a proclamation of his want of a service, and of his qualifications as a fool. The MS. is here imperfect ; but the greater part of his speech is legible, and he thus recommends himself by stating what he can do : he says he is a fool,

' That can rocke the cradle,
 And that can bare a bable :
 That can gether stickes,
 And that can chop lekes :
 That can towrne spitt,
 And that can bith' fier sitt :
 That can ring a bell,
 And that can tales tell :
 That can whope at noone,
 And daunce when dinners done :
 That can washe dishes,
 And that can make ringes a' rushes :
 That can houlde a candell,
 And that can babies dandell :
 That can thresse maulte,
 And that can chope saulte :
 That can hold his finger
 In a hole, and therby linger :
 That can lay downe maidens bedds,
 And that can hold ther sickly heds :
 That can play at put pin,
 Blowe poynte and near lin :
 That can know my right hande,
 And tell twenty and near stande :
 That can finde a titmuns nest,
 And keape a robin redbreste :
 That can eat and drinke and play,
 Singe songes both night and day :
 That can go to th' winde mill,
 And that can do whatsere ye will.
 And now for all this my taske,
 Small wages I will aske :
 A cap onelye once bith' yeare,
 And some prety cullerd geare :
 And drinke when sere I wull,
 And eat my belly full :

For more I will not seke.

He that will have me lett him speake.'

While he addresses the audience he stands on some elevation, probably a stool, for he says that they would laugh to see him fall. He can find nobody to hire him, on which he observes shrewdly, 'fooles now may go a begging, evry boddye's become so witty'.

The last scene remaining in the MS. is Scene iv of Act iv, in which Misogonus, urged by Liturgus, becomes heartily repentant, and is reconciled to his father. It is difficult to imagine how another act could be made out of the story, which in the large fragment before us seems complete.

From this sketch it is apparent that there is a good deal of variety of situation and character in the comedy of *Misogonus*, although the plot is simple and single. Of the elder brother we see nothing until the fourth act; but the younger brother is a very prominent personage, intended to exhibit the evil habits and propensities of a gay gallant in those days. He and his servants contrast well with the two old men, and their faithful attendant Liturgus; while Cacurgus, the fool, who endeavours to keep in with both parties, comes forward in nearly every scene, and must have been a very amusing character, in his double capacity of rustic simpleton and artful mischief-maker. There are few pieces in the whole range of our ancient drama, as has been already observed, which display the important character of the domestic fool in anything like so full and clear a light. Taking the date of the piece to be that which it bears (and which I apprehend to be that of its performance at Kettering, or of the making of the transcript), 1577, it is a production of much value, with reference to the history of our stage; but that value is greatly increased, since we have ascertained that it was written as early as the

year 1560. On this point the internal evidence is so strong, as in fact to be conclusive. Certain it is, that in all the plays of Shakespeare, the dates of which are doubtful, there is not any circumstance so decisive to fix the period when any one of them came from his pen, or was acted at the Globe or Blackfriars theatres.

Comedy in this country was of elder birth than tragedy: the earliest extant piece that can with any fitness be called a tragedy was written by Thomas Sackville (afterwards Lord Buckhurst and Earl of Dorset) and Thomas Norton; and it was played before the Queen at Whitehall, by the members of the Inner Temple, on the 18th of January 1561. Its correct, though not its most ancient, title is *The tragedy of Ferrex and Porrex*, but it only bears it in the second edition of 1571, while it is called *The tragedy of Gorboduc*, in the copies of 1565 and 1590.¹ It is reprinted in *Dodsley's Old Plays* and in *Hawkins' Origin of the English Drama*, and Warton has given an analysis of it, accompanied by critical

¹ The following is the exact title-page of the earliest edition, which has never yet been given quite correctly:—'The Tragedie of *Gorboduc*, whereof three Actes were written by Thomas Nortone, and the two laste by Thomas Sackuyle. Sett forthe as the same was shewed before the Queene's most excellent Maiestie, in her highnes Court of Whitehall, the xvij day of January, Anno Domini 1561. By the Gentlemen of Thynner Temple in London. Imprynted at London in Fletestrete, at the Sign of the Faucon, by William Griffith. And are to be sold at his Shop in Saincte Dunstone's Churchyarde in the West of London. Anno 1565. Septemb. 22.' This copy was not authorised by either of those who wrote it, and it occasioned the appearance of the second edition, which is without date, excepting that it states that it had been 'shewed on stage before the Queene's Majestie about nine yeares past, viz., the 18th day of Januarie, 1561.' The third edition of 1590, by Edward Allde, was only a re-impression of the spurious copy of 1565. For our quotations we have used the authentic edition, printed by John Day, in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire.

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remarks, which display his usual good taste and extensive erudition.¹ We cannot do better than quote his brief but accurate abstract of the plot :

‘Gorboduc, a king of Britain about 600 years before Christ, made in his lifetime a division of his kingdom to his sons Ferrex and Porrex. The two young Princes, within five years, quarrelled for universal sovereignty : a civil war ensued, and Porrex slew his elder brother Ferrex. Their mother Viden, who loved Ferrex best, revenged his death by entering Porrex’s chamber in the night, and murdering him in his sleep. The people, exasperated at the cruelty and treachery of this murder, rose in rebellion and killed both Viden and Gorboduc. The nobility then assembled, collected an army, and destroyed the rebels. An intestine war commenced between the chief lords : the succession of the crown became uncertain and arbitrary, for want of the lineal royal issue ; and the country, destitute of a king, and wasted by domestic slaughter, was reduced to a state of the most miserable desolation.’

The death of Porrex by the hand of Videna (whom Warton calls Viden) occurs at the close of the fourth act, where the circumstances of the event are related by one of the characters : here, in fact, the tragedy ought to have ended, for the catastrophe is complete ; but the author of this part of it eked it out, certainly not very amusingly, by various harangues and narrations, relative to the civil war which followed the death

The circumstances of the life of Sackville are well known, and in the edition of *Dodsley’s Old Plays*, 1825 (vol. i), are some extracts from his funeral sermon by Dr. Abbot, in 1608. Norton was a barrister, and counsel at one period to the Stationers’ Company. He was appointed by the Privy Council member of a commission to inquire into certain disputes respecting the trade of printing ; and he particularly complained of Wolfe, who had procured his freedom from the Fishmongers’ Company, and had printed works for which others had the sole right granted by the Crown. See *Lansdowne MS.* No. 48.

¹ *Hist. Eng. Poet.*, iv, 180, *et seq.*, edit. 8vo.

of all the members of the royal family. Dumb shows precede each of the five acts, prefiguring what is to occur,¹ and in that which is placed before Act v the impropriety has been committed of introducing a troop of soldiers, six hundred years before Christ, with fire-arms, which are discharged to indicate the bloodshed about to ensue: 'First the drommes and flutes began to sound, during which there came forth upon the stage a company of *hargabusiers*, and of armed men, all in order of battaile: these, after their pieces discharged, and that the armed men had marched three times about the stage, departed', etc. Sir Philip Sidney, who, in his *Apology of Poetry* (written about 1583) maintains the fitness of observing the ancient unities, while he complains, as we have seen, that those of time and place are neglected in *Ferrex and Porrex*, admits that it is 'full of stately speeches and well sounding phrases, climbing to the height of Seneca his stile, and full of notable morality, which it doth most delightfully teach'.² *Ferrex and Porrex* was vastly superior, both in design and execution, to most of the performances by which our ancestors, about the period when it was written, were delighted; but it cannot be disputed that the story proceeds with laborious sluggishness, and that the dialogue is generally as weighty as the plot it developes. The speeches are usually of most

¹ Warton justly remarks that these dumb shows in our oldest tragedies were 'not always typical of the ensuing incidents'. They sometimes served as a compendious introduction of such circumstances as could not commodiously be comprehended within the bounds of the representation: they sometimes supplied deficiencies, and covered the want of business. (*Hist. Eng. Poet.*, iii, 183, edit. 8vo.)

² Sir P. Sidney did not live to see tragedy and comedy brought to the perfection which they afterwards attained, and mainly by the disregard of the unities. Had he lived ten years longer, his opinion might possibly have been different.

tedious length, and the thoughts and sentiments more than sufficiently trite.

There is one circumstance, connected with *Ferrex and Porrex*, which has not been noticed anywhere with the emphasis due to its importance: it was the first known play in the English language written in blank-verse. Many years elapsed before this heroic measure without rhyme was adopted on the public stages of London, but after the example had been set by Sackville and Norton, blank-verse was not unfrequently employed in performances written expressly for the Court, and for representation before select audiences. On this account, principally, we shall make two short extracts from *Ferrex and Porrex*; the first from one of the three acts assigned to Norton, and the last from one of the two acts which are given to Sackville by the printer of the first edition, which was surreptitiously published, without the knowledge and consent of the authors, a few years after it was originally acted. Warton was of opinion, merely on the ground of the uniformity of style, that Norton had little or nothing to do with the composition of the play; but independent of the consideration that poets of that day, making a novel experiment, and penning blank-verse (which usually only differed from couplets in the absence of rhyme), would write in a similar style, it is to be remembered, not only that the printer of the earliest impression assigns the two last acts to Norton, but that a contemporary poet of no mean consideration, Jasper Heywood, in the year 1560, couples the names of Sackville and Norton: perhaps, in the lax phraseology of that time, the words 'sonnets' and 'ditties' include even the play before us, which might be finished in 1560, though not performed until the year after:—Heywood's words are;

'There Sackvylde's sonnetts sweetely sauste,
And featly fyned be;
There Norton's ditties do delight,' etc.

These lines are part of a long supposed dialogue between Seneca and Heywood (at the time a very young man, for he says of himself,

'Thou seest dame Nature yet hath sette no heares upon my chinne,') who was publishing his translation of *Thyestes*: this might lead him naturally to a recollection of the dramatic poets of the day, at the head of whom he would place Sackville and Norton. Supposing, however, that Heywood had no such allusion, we do not see sufficient reason for depriving Norton of what the contemporary printer, who had perhaps derived the copy and the information from some friend of one of the authors, considered his right. Had he not believed the fact to be as he represented it, it would probably have answered his purpose better to have published the tragedy as the entire work of a man of Sackville's character and station, than to have given him an inferior coadjutor. The following lines are perhaps as good as any to be found in Norton's portion of the tragedy: they are from a speech by Arostus, in the first act, after the old king has opened to his counsellors his plan for dividing his kingdom between his two sons, Ferrex and Porrex.

'I thinke in all as erst your grace hath saide.
Firste when you shall unlode your aged mynde
Of hevye care and troubles manifolde,
And laye the same upon my lordes, your sonnes,
Whose growing yeres may beare the burden long,
And long I pray the Goddes to graunt it so ;
And in your life while you shall so beholde
Their rule, their vertues, and their noble deedes,
Suche as their kinde behighteth to us all,
Great be the profites that shall growe therof.
Your age in quiet shall the longer last,
Your lasting age shalbe their longer stay :
For cares of kynges, that rule as you have ruled,

For publique wealth and not for private joye,
 Do wast mannes lyfe and hasten crooked age
 With furrowed face and with enfeebled lymmes,
 To draw on creepyng death a swifter pace.
 They two, yet yong, shall beare the parted reigne,
 With greater ease than one, now olde, alone
 Can welde the whole ; for whom mucche harder is
 With lessened strength the double weight to beare.'

The impersonation of 'crooked age' in the latter part of this quotation is forcible, but the lines are heavy and monotonous, without variety of pause and inflection. The same faults, and in nearly the same degree, belong to the lines by Sackville, as may be judged by the subsequent extract from the second scene of the fifth act, which forms part of a speech by Eubulus, secretary to the old King.

'O Jove, how are these people's harts abusde !
 What blind fury thus headlong caries them !
 That though so many bookes, so many rolles
 Of auncient time recorde what grevous plagues
 Light on these rebelles aye, and though so oft
 Their eares have heard their aged fathers tell
 What juste reward these traitours still receyve ;
 Yea, though themselves have sene depe death and bloud,
 By strangling cord and slaughter of the sword,
 To such assigned, yet can they not beware ;
 Yet can not stay their lewde rebellious handes,
 But suffring, loe, fowle treason to distaine
 Their wretched myndes, forget their loyall hart,
 Reject all truth, and rise against their prince.
 A ruthefull case that those whom duties bond,
 Whom grafted law by nature, truth, and faith,
 Bound to preserve their countrey and their king,
 Borne to defend their common wealth and prince,

Even they should geve consent thus to subvert
Thee, Brittain land, and from thy wombe should spring
(O native soile !) those that will needs destroy
And ruyne thee, and eke themselves in fine.'

As far as mere versification is concerned, perhaps, on a close comparison of these two passages, the palm ought to be assigned to Sackville. According to Warton, his coadjutor could have had no more to do with the tragedy, than perhaps the preparation of the dumb shows. Choruses in rhyme close the four first acts, and the last act is terminated by a dull didactic speech of nearly two hundred lines. Three of the choruses are in six-line stanzas, the first four lines of which rhyme alternately, while the two last form a couplet: the chorus to the third act only is in alternate rhymes.

DAMON AND PYTHIAS.—THE SUPPOSES.—JOCASTA.—TAN-
CRED AND GISMUND.—TRANSLATIONS FROM SENECA.
—PLAYS AT COURT BETWEEN 1568 AND 1580.

Richard Edwards enjoyed a very high reputation as a dramatic poet, but he seems to have owed much of it to the then comparative novelty of his undertakings. Thomas Twine (who completed Phaer's translation of the *Eneid* in 1573), in an epitaph upon the death of Edwards, calls him—

'The flower of our realm,
And phoenix of our age,'¹

and specifically mentions two of his plays, *Damon and Pythias*

¹ In 'an Epitaph upon the death of the worshipfull Maister Richarde Edwardes, late Maister of the Children of the Queenes Majesties Chappell', in Turberville's *Epitaphes, Epigrams, Songs and Sonets*, printed in 1567, 8vo. Turberville, probably, was murdered in 1579, by John Morgan,

and *Palamon and Arcyte*, adding, however, that he had written more, equally fit for the ears of princes—

‘Thy tender tunes and rhymes,
Wherein thou wont’st to play,
Each princely dame of court and town
Shall bear in mind alway.
Thy Damon and his friend,
Arcyte and Palemon,
With more full fit for princes ears,
Though thou from earth art gone,
Shall still remain in fame,’ etc.¹

He is mentioned in Webbe’s *Discourse of English Poetry*, 1586; and Puttenham in his *Art of English Poesy*, 1589, tells us that the Earl of Oxford (of whose dramatic productions there is no other trace) and Edwards deserve the highest prize for ‘comedy and interlude’. Meres, in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598, repeats the applause given by Puttenham, with the omission of the generic word ‘interlude’, then out of fashion, terming Edwards ‘one of the best for comedy’.

The earliest notice we have of Edwards as a dramatic poet occurs in 1564-5, when a tragedy by him, the name of which is not given, was performed by the children of the chapel under his direction, before the Queen at Richmond. It has been remarked elsewhere,² that this might possibly be his

as appears by the following entry in the Stationers’ *Registers* of that year: ‘A dittie of M. Turberville murdered, and John Morgan that murdered him, with a letter of the said Morgan to his mother, and another to his sister Turberville.’

¹ Warton (*Hist. Eng. Poet.*, iv, 112) says that Twine was an actor in Edwards’s *Palamon and Arcyte*; and that Miles Winsore, the antiquary, was another of the performers; and afterwards delivered an oration before the Queen at Bradenham.

² *Annals of the Stage*, vol. i, p. 183.

Damon and Pythias, termed by Lord Burghley, in the uncertain phraseology of that time, 'a tragedy'; or it might be one of the other dramatic performances, of which, according to Twine, Edwards was the author. *Damon and Pythias* is the only extant specimen of his talents in this department of poetry, but his *Palamon and Arcyte* was acted before Elizabeth at Christchurch, Oxford, on the 2nd and 3rd of September, 1569, only about two months before the death of its author, which happened on the 31st of October. Twine informs us in his epitaph, that Edwards was of Corpus Christi, and subsequently of Christchurch, Oxford, and he did not leave the University until after August 1544. Turberville, in the introduction to a poem by him on the death of Edwards, calls him 'gentleman of Lincoln's Inn', where he probably entered himself when he first came to London, and before he was appointed by Elizabeth Master of the Children of the Chapel. Warton, after stating that Edwards 'united all those arts and accomplishments that minister to popular pleasantry',¹ which may be very true, adds, what is unquestionably a mistake, that the children of the chapel were first formed by him into a company of players: they had regularly acted plays long before.

*Damon and Pythias*² does not present the improvement introduced by Sackville and Norton in 1561-2: it is written in rhyme, and perhaps the author thought it better suited to the tragi-comical manner in which he has treated his story. The serious portions are unvaried and heavy, and the lighter scenes grotesque without being humorous. All kinds of dramatic propriety are disregarded, and among other absurdities the author has carried Grim, the Collier of Croydon, to the court of Dionysius, where he has sundry coarse colloquies with a

¹ *History of English Poetry*, iv, 110, edit. 8vo.

² It is reprinted in the different editions of *Dodsley's Old Plays*.

couple of lackies, named Jack and Will. A brief specimen of one of these, on the prevailing fashion of wearing large bombasted hose, will be a sufficient, though not perhaps a satisfactory specimen.

Grimme.—Are ye servants then?

Wyll.—Yea, Sir : are we not pretie men?

Grimme.—Pretie men (quoth you?) nay you are stronge men, Els you could not beare these britches.

Wyll.—Are these such great hose?

In faith, goodman Colier, ye see with your nose.

By myne honestie, I have but one lining in one hose, but seven els of a roug.

Grimme.—This is but a little, yet it makes thee seeme a great bugge.

Jacke.—How say you, goodman Colier, can you finde any faulte here?

Grimme.—Nay, you should finde faught. Mary, here's trimme geare! Alas, little knave, dost not sweat? thou goest with great payne :

These are no hose but water bougets, I tell thee playne ;

Good for none but suche as have no buttockes.

Did you ever see two such little Robin-ruddockes,

So laden with breeches? Chill say no more, leste I offende.

Who invented these monsters first, did it to a gostly ende :

To have a male readie to put in other folkes stuffe ;

We see this evident by dayly prooffe,' etc.

This is assuredly poor comedy, even for the time ; and the subsequent quotation is from the tragic part of the play, when Pithias is about to be beheaded by Gronno, the executioner. Gronno says—

'Now, Pithias, kneele downe, aske me blessing like a pretie boy,
And with a trise thy head from thy shoulders I wyll convay.

[*Here entreth Damon running, and stayes the sword.*

Damon.—Stay, stay, stay ! for the kinges advantage stay !
 O mightie kynge ! myne appointed time is not yet fully past ;
 Within the compasse of myne houre, loe here I come at last.
 A life I owe, and a life I will you pay.—
 Oh, my Pithias ! my noble pledge, my constant friend !
 Ah, wo is me ! for Damon's sake how neare were thou to thy ende !
 Geve place to me ; this rowme is myne, on this stage must I play.
 Damon is the man ; none ought but he to Dionisius his blood to pay.
Gronno.—Are you come, Sir ? you might have tarried, if you had
 bene wyse ;
 For [of] your hastie comming you are lyke to know the prise.
Pithias.—O thou cruell minnister, why didst not thou thine office ?
 Did not I bidde thee make hast in any wyse ?
 Hast thou spared to kill me once, that I may die twyse ?
 Not to die for my friend is present death to me ; and alas !
 Shall I see my sweet Damon slaine before my face ?
 What double death is this ?

These examples will tend to establish, that although Edwards continued to employ rhyme, he endeavoured to get rid of some part of its monotony, by varying the length of his lines, and by not preserving the cæsure. It was nearly new, at the date when this piece was written, to bring stories from profane history upon the stage : *Damon and Pythias* was one of the earliest attempts of the kind ; and at any other period, and without the Queen's extraordinary commendations, it may at least be doubted, whether Edwards would have acquired an equal degree of notoriety or applause.

Two plays were represented at Gray's Inn in 1566 : the one was *The Supposes*, translated by George Gascoigne from *Gli Suppositi* of Ariosto ; and the other *Jocasta*, adapted by Gascoigne, Francis Kinwelmarsh, and Christopher Yelverton¹

¹ Yelverton's name ought hardly to be mentioned, as, it seems, he only contributed the epilogue.

from the *Phænissæ* of Euripides. The first of these is remarkable, as it is the only existing specimen of a play in English prose, acted either in public or private, up to that date.¹ Gascoigne rendered it principally from the Italian prose original, printed at Venice in 1525, but not without adopting some of the changes made by Ariosto, when he subsequently turned the comedy into verse. On the whole, the translation may be called faithful, for Gascoigne has added very little of his own, contenting himself chiefly with a few unimportant omissions: the termination, however, differs slightly from both the original copies. 'The prologue or argument' is all that really belongs to the translator, and it merely consists of a repetition of the word 'suppose' in the same and somewhat different senses, which does him little credit as a punster, and none as a poet. More attention has been drawn to this production, on account of the fancied connection between a part of the plot of *The Supposes* and of *The Taming of the Shrew*, which Dr. Farmer pointed out in 1766 in his *Essay on the learning of Shakespeare*.²

Jocasta, as has been stated, was acted in the same year as

¹ Hawkins included it in his *Origin of the English Drama*, vol. iii, but he does not seem to have been aware of this peculiarity.

² Gascoigne wrote another piece in a dramatic form, the body of which is in prose, although it has four choruses and an epilogue in rhyme, besides two didactic poems in the third act. It is called *The Glasse off Government, a tragicall comedie*, and the author states that he so terms it 'because therein are handled as well the reward for vertues as also the punishment for vices'. It is, in fact, a most tedious puritanical treatise upon education, illustrated by the different talents and propensities of four young men placed under the same master: the two cleverest are seduced to vice, while the two dullest persevere in a course of virtue, and one of them becomes secretary to the Landgrave, and the other 'a famous preacher'. Nothing can be more uninteresting than the whole performance, although the author has laboured to enliven it by the introduction of a Parasite, a Bawd, a Prostitute, a Roister, and a knavish servant.

The Supposes, and at the same place : it is very possible that a play was required for some sudden emergency, and that, on this account, Gascoigne obtained the assistance of his friends, Kinwelmarsh and Yelverton. It deserves attention, as the second dramatic performance in our language in blank verse, and the first known attempt to introduce a Greek play upon the English stage. It cannot be called so properly a translation as an adaptation ; for, as Warton has observed, there are in it 'many omissions, retrenchments, and transpositions'.¹ The authors, in fact, used no more of the *Phænissæ* than suited their purpose, and that which they did use they have sometimes treated with little ceremony. The substance of the story, however, has not been changed, and the characters are the same as in the original. Gascoigne was employed upon the second, third, and fifth, and Kinwelmarsh upon the first and fourth acts ; and each act (as in *Ferrex and Porrex*) is preceded by a dumb show, accompanied by appropriate music of 'viols, cythren, bandurion', flutes, cornets, trumpets, drums, fifes, and stillpipes.² In the fourth dumb show 'a greate peale of ordinance was shot off', after which a representation took place of the conflict between the Horatii and Curiatii, as typical of what was to follow. The third dumb show was a similar exhibition of the story of Curtius. The following quotation from the first speech of Bailo to Antigone, in Act i, will prove that Kinwelmarsh, though much less notorious, wrote quite as good blank verse as his predecessors, Sackville and Norton.

The schoolmaster preaches a regular sermon, quoting chapter and verse, and reads a long lecture on the duties of honour, obedience, and love. It was not printed until 1575, and as the author died two years afterwards, it was most likely, if not his latest, one of his latest works.

¹ *Hist. Engl. Poet.*, iv, 197, edit. 8vo.

² In the Household Accounts of Henry VII and Henry VIII, we meet with constant payments 'to the Stillminstrells'.

'O gentle daughter of king Œdipus,
 O sister deare to that unhappy wight,
 Whom brothers rage hath reaved of his right,
 To whom thou knowest, in young and tender yeres,
 I was a frend and faithfull governor,
 Come foorth, sith that her grace hath granted leave,
 And let me know what cause hath moved now
 So chaste a mayde to set her daynty foote
 Over the threshold of her secret lodge?
 Since that the towne is furnisht every where
 With men of armes and warlike instruments,
 Unto our eares there comes no other noyse,
 But sound of trumpe, and ney of trampling steedes,
 Which running up and downe from place to place,
 With hideous cryes betoken blood and death.
 The blasing sunne ne shineth halfe so bright,
 As it was woont to doe at dawne of day:
 The wretched dames throughout the woful towne,
 Together clustring to the temple goe,
 Beseeching Jove by way of humble playnt,
 With tender ruth to pity their distresse.'

As far as a judgment can be formed from the works left behind them, Gascoigne must have been a much more practised poet than his principal coadjutor on this occasion:¹ but, nevertheless, it cannot be said that there is any material disparity in the versification of the two: Gascoigne, perhaps, has the advantage, and there is spirit and force in the subsequent lines, which form part of his description, in Act v, of the fight between Eteocles and Polinices.

'So sayd Eteocles; and trumpets blowne
 To sounde the summons of their bloudy fighte,

¹ All that remains of Francis Kinwelmarsh beyond what is contained in this tragedy, is some poems with the initials F. K. in *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*.

That one the other fiercely did encounter,
 Like lyons two, yfraught with boyling wrath,
 Both coucht their launces ful against the face.
 But heaven it nolde¹ that there they should them teint :
 Upon the battred shields the mighty speares
 Are both ybroke, and in a thousand shivers
 Amyd the ayre flowen up into the heavens.
 Behold againe, with naked swords in hand,
 Each one the other furiously assaults.
 Here they of Thebes, there stooode the Greekes in dout,
 Of whom doth each man feele more chilling dread,
 Lest any of the twaine should lose his life,
 Then any of the twaine did feele in fight.
 Their angry lookes, their deadly daunting blowes,
 Might witnes wel that in their hearts remaynd
 As cankred hate, disdayne, and furious moode,
 As ever bred in beare or tygers brest.²

The Epilogue to this tragedy is the only poem remaining by Sir Christopher Yelverton (father of Sir Henry Yelverton), who was afterwards knighted and appointed a judge: the following lines, which conclude it, are by no means deficient in harmony, and we insert them the more willingly, as this poem has hitherto been passed over almost without notice.

‘O blinde unbridled search of sovereintie,
 O tickle traine of evill² attayned state !
 O fonde desire of princely dignitie !
 Who clymes too soone he oft repents too late.

¹ *Nolde* is *ne wold*, or ‘would not’; which explanatory words are inserted in the margin of the edition of 1587, shewing that even then ‘nolde’ might not be generally understood.

² Whether, according to our lexicographers, ‘ill’ be an abridgement of *evil* or *idle*, it was often, if not commonly, considered and pronounced of old as a monosyllable.

The golden meane the happy doth suffice ;
 They leade the poasting day in rare delight,
 They fill (not feede) their discontented eies,
 They reape such rest as doth beguile the night ;
 They not envy the pompe of hauty traine,
 Ne dread the dint of proud usurping swords ;
 But plast alow more sugred joyes attaine,
 Than sway of lofty scepter can affoorde.
 Cease to aspire, then ; cease to soare so hie,
 And shunne the plague that pierceth noble brestes.
 To glittering courts what fondnes is to flie
 When better state in baser towers restes !'

Baron Yelverton must have been a poet of some considerable note before 1560, for in that year he is mentioned, in company with Sackville and Norton, by Jasper Heywood, in the introduction to his translation of Seneca's *Thyestes*: Heywood says of them,

'Such yong men three,
 As weene thou mightst agayne
 To be begotte, as Pallas was,
 Of mighty Jove his brayne.'

Twenty years afterwards, the name of Christopher Yelverton again occurs, in connexion with a play got up and performed by the members of Gray's Inn, before the Queen at Greenwich.

Another production, of about this period, requires observation, both on account of the early date at which it was originally written, and some peculiar circumstances attending it. It was presented before Elizabeth, at the Inner Temple, in 1568, and it was the work of five persons, probably all members of that Inn, each of whom contributed an act.¹ It

¹ Their names are thus subscribed: Rod Staff at the close of act i,—

is called *The tragedy of Tancred and Gismund*,¹ and it is founded upon the famous novel of Boccacio, forming the thirty-ninth of the series, in Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, which had then only recently made its appearance. The tragedy does not seem to have been printed on its performance in 1568; but the author of the last act, Robert Wilmot, living until after 1592, published it in that year, when, as the title-page states, it was 'newly revived, and polished according to the decorum of these days'. The meaning of this passage seems to be, that the piece was in the first instance composed in rhyme: in 1592 (as we shall have occasion to show hereafter more at large), rhyme was going out of fashion, even on the public stage; and the *reviving* and *polishing*, by Robert Wilmot, consisted chiefly in cutting off many of the 'tags to the lines', or turning them differently. Nevertheless, much yet remains in rhyme, even of the fifth act, of which Wilmot was the original author; and if the fragment quoted in the last edition of *Dodsley's Old Plays* be a part of the first draught of this tragedy, as it was performed in 1568, it confirms the conjecture we have drawn from the expression on the title-page, inasmuch as that is wholly in alternate rhyme. Excepting in the important difference between rhyme and blank verse, the general structure of this tragedy resembles that of *Ferrex and Porrex* and *Jocasta*: it has dumb-shows to commence, and choruses to terminate every act. *Tancred and Gismund* seems the earliest English play extant the plot of which is known to be derived from an Italian novel.

A classical taste began to be generally apparent very soon

Hen. No., at the end of act ii,—G. All., at the termination of act iii,—Ch. Hat., after act iv, while R. W. follows the epilogue. Hen. No. is supposed to mean Henry Noel; Ch. Hat., Christopher Hatton; and R. W., Robert Wilmot. The other two are unappropriated.

¹ See *Dodsley's Old Plays*, last edit., ii, 159.

after Elizabeth came to the crown, and it produced its effects upon our national drama. The translation of the *Andria* of Terence had been printed about thirty years before she ascended the throne; and at a distance of from ten to fifteen years, it was followed by the interlude called *Jack Fuggler*, founded upon a play by Plautus. *Jocasta*, from the *Phœnissæ* of Euripides, was acted, as has been mentioned, in 1566; but it was preceded by a series of translations of the tragedies of Seneca, for the commencement of which we are indebted to an author already named—Jasper Heywood, son to the celebrated John Heywood. Most of these versions came out separately in octavo, between the years 1559 and 1566. The *Troas*, by Jasper Heywood, had certainly appeared in 1559,¹ as it is mentioned in the prefatory matter to *Thyestes*, by the same hand, printed in 1560.² *Hercules Furens*, also by Heywood, was published in 1561:³ *Ædipus*, by Alexander Nevyle, came out in 1563,⁴ and *Medea* and *Agamemnon*, by John Studley, in 1566. *Octavia*, by Thomas Nuce, was entered on the Stationers' books in the same year, and it was printed by Henry Denham. These seven, with the addition of *Hippolytus* and *Hercules Octæus* by Studley, and

¹ It was printed by T. Powell without date; and in the 'Preface' to *Thyestes*, Heywood complains bitterly of the errors of the press, though he had corrected the proofs himself. He states that he had sworn that Powell should never print another work by him, and he appears to have kept his word.

² 'Imprinted in the house of the late Thomas Berthelettes.'

³ 'Imprinted by H. Sutton, 1561'; so that, perhaps, the executors of Berthelet pleased Heywood as little as Powell had done.

⁴ Warton (*H. E. P.*, iv, 208) thought that this play was not printed until 1581; but a copy, printed by Thomas Colwell, '1563, 28 Aprilis', is in the Garrick Collection. Warton was also incorrect in asserting that the *Medea*, by John Studley, was not published until 1581: T. Colwell was the printer of that tragedy, as well as of *Agamemnon*.

the *Thebais* by Thomas Newton, were printed collectively in quarto, in 1581.¹ Nine of the ten tragedies are in fourteen-syllable Alexandrines (excepting the choruses, the measure of which is varied), and the tenth, *Octavia* by Nuce, is partly in ten-syllable couplets, and partly in lines of eight syllables, rhyming alternately.

Had they all been mere translations, we should have dismissed them with greater brevity; but Heywood and Studley have some claim to be viewed in the light of original dramatic poets: they added whole scenes and choruses wherever they thought them necessary, and even Nevyle (who is inferior to his coadjutors)² tells the reader, that 'he hath sometymes boldly presumed to erre from his author, rovyng at random where he list, adding and subtracting at his pleasure'. This circumstance proves, as Warton has very justly remarked, that dramatic 'authors now began to think for themselves, and that

¹ Under the following title: 'Seneca his tenne Tragedies, translated into English. *Mercurii nutrices horæ*. Imprinted at London, in Fleet-streete, neare unto Saincte Dunstons church, by Thomas Marshe, 1581.' Thomas Newton, who was more celebrated as a Latin than as an English poet, undertook the office of editor, and very modestly did not substitute his own version of the *Troas* for that of Heywood. To Thomas Newton, who began writing as early as 1560, Warton, Ritson, and others, attribute a collection of poems on the death of Queen Elizabeth, published in 1603, under the title of *Atropoion Delion, or the Death of Delia*. One of these poems is an acrostic to Lady Francis [Strange?], in which these two lines occur, which seem decisive that Newton of Chester was not the writer of them.

'Fainting with sorrow, this my *youngling Muse*
Requires as much of you for Delia's death.'

If Newton began writing forty-three years before the date when this *Atropoion* was printed, he would hardly have applied the epithet *youngling* to his Muse.

² On this point we differ, with great humility, from Warton. *H. E. P.*, iv, 208, edit. 8vo.

they were not always implicitly enslaved to the prescribed letter of their models'. We shall speak briefly of each of these writers in succession.

The tragedies by Jasper Heywood are reprinted in the quarto of 1581, as they had first appeared in the octavo editions of fifteen or twenty years' earlier date.¹ Of these, the first was *Troas*, published while he was yet a lad at the University; and his additions were numerous, including a scene in stanzas, in which the ghost of Achilles claims the sacrifice of Polyxena, a new chorus for the third act, and a supplement to that which terminates the first act. The following lines, from the last, show that at a very early age Heywood was no mean versifier.

'If prowess could eternitie procure,
Then Pryame yet should live in lykyng lust :
Ay, portly pompe of pride, thou art unsure !
Lo, learne by him, O kinges ! ye are but dust.
And Hecuba that wayleth now in care,
That was so late of high estate a Queene,
A mirrour is to teache you what you are :
Your wavering welth, O Princes ! here is seene.
Whom dawne of day hath seen in high estate
Before sunnes set, alas, hath had his fall :
The cradelles rocke apointes the life his date,
From settled joy to sodain funerall.'

To *Thyestes* he subjoined a scene at the close, where the hero soliloquizes on his misfortunes: he seems to have laboured to be forcible, and in exaggerating the terrific has almost arrived at the ludicrous. It thus commences—

'O kyng of Dytis dungeon darke
and grysly ghosts of hell,

¹ With the omission, however, of the curious introductory matter.

That in the deepe and dredful denns
 of blackest Tartare dwell ;
 Where leane and pale diseases lye,
 where feare and famyne are,
 Where discorde standes with bleedyng browes,
 where every kynde of care,
 Where furies fight in bedds of steele,
 And heares of cralling snakes ;
 Where Gorgon grymme, where Harpies are,
 and lothsome Lymbo Lakes,
 Where most prodigious uglye thynges
 the hollowe helle dothe hyde,
 If yet a monster more misshapte
 then all that there do byde,
 That makes his broode his cursed foode,
 ye all abhorre to see,
 Nor yet the deepe Auerne it selfe
 may byde to cover me :
 Nor grysly gates of Plutoes place
 yet dare them selves to spredde,
 Nor gapyng groundes to swallowe him
 whome godds and day have fledde ;
 Yet breake ye out from cursed seates
 and here remayne with me,
 Ye neede not now to be affrayde
 the ayre and heaven to se.'

Studley tells us himself, in the dedication of his *Agamemnon*, 1566, to Sir W. Cecill, that he had been educated at 'the grammar school of Westminster', and that he had afterwards gone to Cambridge. He added to the fifth act of this tragedy a long soliloquy by Eurybates, detailing more particularly than had been done in the body of the performance, the death of Cassandra, the flight of Orestes, and the capture of his

sister. The following is an alliterative specimen of his talents as an original poet.

‘ Alas, ye hatefull hellysh haggas,
 ye furies foule and fell,
 Why cause ye rusty rancours rage
 in noble hartes to dwell ;
 And cancred hate in boylunge brestes
 to grow from age to age ?
 Could not the graundsyres painful panges
 the chyldrens wrath asswage ?
 Nor famyne faint of pynyng paunche,
 with burnyng thurste of hell,
 Amid the blackest stream of Styckes
 where poysnyng breathes do well ;
 Where vapors vyle parbraking¹ out
 from dampysh myry mud,
 Encrease the paynes of Tantalus,
 deserved by gyltles blood ?
 Could not thyne owne offence suffyce,
 Thyestes, in thy lyfe,
 To fyle thy brothers spousall bed,
 and to abuse his wyfe ;
 But after breath from body fled,
 and lyfe thy limbes hath left,
 Can not remembraunce of revenge
 out of thy brest be reft ?’

The subsequent stanza, from the chorus to the fourth act of *Medea*, may prove that the preceding quotation was not in Studley's natural vein, although he thought that a scene of the kind was required to complete the *Agamemnon*.

‘ Now, Phœbus, lodge thy charyot in the west,
 Let neyther raynes nor brydle stay thy race :
 Let groveling light with dulceat nyght opprest,
 In cloking cloudes wrap up his muffled face ;

¹ *Parbraking* out is vomiting out.

Let Hesperus, the loadesman of the nyght,
In western floode drench deepe the day so bryght.'

Alexander Nevyle was also very young when he published his translation of *Ædipus* in 1563. It is to be observed, that Warton, who thought Nevyle's 'the most spirited and elegant version in the collection', only saw the tragedy as it stands in the edition of 1581, which materially varies from the older copy. When Nevyle wrote in 1563, he was evidently a most unskilful versifier: if, as often happened, he thought a few words necessary to the full meaning of his author, but which he could not contrive to bring into his metre, he did not scruple to add them in a parenthesis, thus:—

'Whereat my tongue amazed stayes :
God graunt that at the last
It fall not out as Creon tolde :
Not yet the worst is past (I feare).'

So that to read the translation right on makes the measure appear most rugged and uncouth, and to omit the parenthesis renders the sense unintelligible. In 1581 many of these defects were removed (whether by Newton, the editor of the collection, or by Nevyle, is not stated), and the translation assumed a more regular and polished form: still, the versification is often harsh and unsatisfactory to the ear, and the defect already mentioned seems to have been found in not a few instances incorrigible. The following quotations will show the degree of improvement introduced, and that Nevyle does not merit, at least to its full extent, the eulogium of Warton, even supposing that he superintended the reprint of his *Ædipus*, in 1581. The two passages are from Act ii, scene 2, between *Ædipus* and *Jocasta*, and the first is as it stands in the copy of 1563. *Ædipus* speaks :

'The gaping yearth devyde us both, thone from thother quight :
 Syll let our feete repugnant bee, so shall I shun the lyght,
 (That most me greves).

Jocasta.—The Destenies are in faut. Blame them, alas, alas, not wee.

Ædipus.—Spare now. Leave of[f] to speak in vain. Spare now, O
 mother, mee !

By these relyques of my dismembred body I thee praye,
 By myne unhappy chyldren pledges left. What shall I say ?
 By all the Gods, I thee beseche, by all that in my name
 (Is either good or bad),
 Let me alone. To trouble me, alas, you are to blame.'

It will be allowed that this is hardly readable ; yet we have not selected the passage because it was peculiarly inharmounious : it was rendered a little smooth and flowing in the copy of 1581, which we now quote—

'The gaping earth devide us both, th' one from th'other quight.
 Still let our feete repugnant bee. So shall I shun the light,
 That most of all me grieves : so shall I space obtaine to wayle
 These bleeding woes on every side that doe my thoughtes assayle.

Jocasta.—The Destenies are in fault. Blaime them, alas, alas, not wee.

Ædipus.—Spare now. Leave of to speake in vayne, spare now, O
 mother, mee.

By these relyques of my dismembred body I thee pray,
 By myne unhappy children pledges left. What shall I say ?
 By all the Gods I thee beseech. By all that in my name
 Is good or bad, let me alone. Alas ! you are to blame
 To trouble me—You see what hell my haplesse heart doth paine—
 You see that in my conscience ten thousand horrors raine.'

We know of no other instance in which a similar expedient to get over one of the main difficulties of translation (that of compressing the full meaning of the author into the measure of the verse) has been resorted to. Independently of this

deformity, Nevyle is generally very negligent in the observance of the cæsura after the fourth foot, without which the verse of fourteen syllables can seldom run easily and agreeably.

Nuce and Newton we shall dismiss, after making a single quotation from the *Octavia* of the one, and from the *Thebais* of the other, because they claim no merit but that of being faithful renderers. A few lines will serve to establish that fidelity is the chief, if not only, merit of Nuce. They are from *Octavia*, Act ii.—

‘ But now this age, much worse then all the rest,
Hath lept into her mother’s broken breast,
And rusty lumpish yron and massie gold
Hath digged out, that was quite hid with mold.
And fighting fistes have armd without delay,
And drawing forth their bondes for rule to stay
Have certayne several joly kingdomes made,
And cities new have raysde now rulde with blade,
And fenceth either with their proper force
Straunge stoundes, or them assaults, the which is worse.
The starry specked Virgin, flowre of skies,
Which Justice hight, that guiltie folk descries,
Now lightly esteemd of mortall people here
Each earthly stound is fled, and comes not neere
The savage mannerd route, and beastly rude,
With dabbed wristes in goary bloud embrude.’

Newton was perhaps the most finished verse-maker of the five poets engaged upon this work, though the *Thebais* was not the piece best calculated to show off his talents to advantage. If the play were written by Seneca, he left it imperfect, wanting the whole of the fifth act, besides choruses, which Newton would not venture to supply. Warton terms Nuce prosaic, but he had an ungrateful subject, and probably only

undertook it to complete the 'ten tragedies'. There are two passages at the close, which, for the time, seem extremely well rendered. Polynices thus replies to Jocasta, who had been warning him of consequences—

'For that I neyther recke ne care what shall to me befall :
That Prince that feares disdaynful hate unwilling seemes to raigne.
The God that swaies the golden globe together hath these twayne
Conjoynd and coupled—Hate and Rule ; and him do I suppose
To be a noble king indeede, that can supplant his foes,
And subjects' cancred hate suppresses.'

Afterwards he adds—

'To be a king I would engage to force of flaming fire
Both countrey, house, land, wyfe, and chyld to compasse my desyre.
No fee to purchase princely seate, ne labour compt I lost :
A kingly crowne is never deare, whatever price it cost.'

Although a classical taste began thus to be evident soon after Elizabeth ascended the throne, yet plays upon classical, historical, and general subjects did not become common until after she had been some years Queen. The specimens of the drama prior to her reign which have descended to us, either in print or in manuscript (John Heywood's 'interludes', and a few other productions of a similar description excepted) are all in the nature of Miracles or Morals. Edward VI is said to have written 'an elegant comedy', with a not very elegant title, called *The Whore of Babylon*, obviously of a religious and controversial character : *Fube the Sane*, so called in the MS. annals of that reign, was in all probability founded upon the book of Job ; and we hear of the performance but of a single play anterior to the reign of Elizabeth, which, from its name, looks like an original composition of a profane kind : this was *The Sack full of News*,¹ which occasioned the inter-

¹ *A Sack of News* is one of the ancient Jest-books enumerated by

ference of the Privy Council in September 1557, in order to suppress it.

From 1568 to 1580, both inclusive, the Court was entertained with Comedies, Tragedies, Histories, and Morals; and the names of many are preserved in the accounts of the Revels for the respective years. In the *Annals of the Stage* the details that have reached us upon this interesting subject are furnished; but, in connexion with the progress of our dramatic poetry, it may be useful to arrange the pieces, as far as their titles will enable us to do so, in the classes to which they belong. It is, however, necessary to introduce them with this remark—that although it sometimes happened that pieces were written expressly for performance before the Queen on particular occasions, yet the ordinary course was for the Master of the Revels to summon before him the players, who were commanded to exhibit at Christmas, Twelfth-tide, or Shrove-tide, in order that he might learn from them what pieces they could represent, and in order that they might rehearse them in his presence, and enable him to judge of their fitness for the purpose. The plays they so rehearsed were such as the actors were in the habit of playing before popular audiences in London and elsewhere; so that an account of the plays represented at Court is in fact often an account of the plays represented in public; and the list we are about to subjoin will, therefore, serve to show in some degree the then state of the drama. What expurgations the dramas may have undergone in order to adapt them to the loftier and politer audiences, we have few means of knowing; nor can we be sure that the plays at Court were at all the same as those exhibited before popular assemblies at the public theatres.

Laneham, in his Letter from Kenilworth, as in the possession of Captain Cox. The play might be founded upon it, or upon some story it contains. The Jest-book is now only known from an edition dated 1673. We are aware of no play so called.

The following were dramas upon classical subjects, drawn from ancient history or fable, represented at Court in the twelve years between 1568 and 1580.

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|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Orestes.</i> | 10. <i>History of Cynocephali.</i> |
| 2. <i>Iphigenia.</i> | 11. <i>History of a Greek Maid.</i> |
| 3. <i>Ajax and Ulysses.</i> | 12. <i>Rape of the Second Helen.</i> |
| 4. <i>Narcissus.</i> | 13. <i>Titus and Gesyppus.</i> |
| 5. <i>Alcmæon.</i> | 14. <i>Four Sons of Fabius.</i> |
| 6. <i>Quintus Fabius.</i> | 15. <i>Scipio Africanus.</i> |
| 7. <i>Timoclea.</i> | 16. <i>Sarpedon.</i> |
| 8. <i>Perseus and Andromeda.</i> | 17. <i>Pompey.</i> |
| 9. <i>Mutius Scævola.</i> | 18. <i>Mamillia.</i> |

The plays founded apparently upon modern history, romances, and stories of a more general kind, were still more numerous: they were these:—

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|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. <i>King of Scots.</i> | 12. <i>Pretestus.</i> |
| 2. <i>Lady Barbara.</i> | 13. <i>Painter's Daughter.</i> |
| 3. <i>Cloridon and Radiamanta.</i> | 14. <i>Solitary Knight.</i> |
| 4. <i>History of Alucius.</i> | 15. <i>Irish Knight.</i> |
| 5. <i>Paris and Vienna.</i> | 16. <i>Three Sisters of Mantua.</i> |
| 6. <i>Theagenes.</i> | 17. <i>Cruelty of a Stepmother.</i> |
| 7. <i>Pedor and Lucia.</i> | 18. <i>Knight in the Burning Rock.</i> |
| 8. <i>Herpetulus and Perobia.</i> | 19. <i>Murderous Michael.</i> |
| 9. <i>Philimon and Felicia.</i> | 20. <i>Duke of Milan.</i> |
| 10. <i>Phædrastus.</i> | 21. <i>Portia and Demorantes.</i> |
| 11. <i>Love and Fortune.</i> | |

Under the head of Comedies the subsequent pieces may probably be enumerated, though perhaps some of them may belong to other dramatic classes—

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|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. <i>As plain as can be.</i> | 5. <i>Tooley.</i> |
| 2. <i>Six Fools.</i> | 6. <i>History of the Collier.</i> |
| 3. <i>Jack and Jill.</i> | 7. <i>History of Error.</i> |
| 4. <i>Panacæa.</i> | |

We may conclude pretty decisively from their titles that the subsequent pieces were Morals—

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|---|---|
| 1. <i>Painful Pilgrimage.</i> | 5. <i>Marriage of Mind and Measure.</i> |
| 2. <i>Wit and Will.</i> | 6. <i>Loyalty and Beauty.</i> |
| 3. <i>Prodigality.</i> | |
| 4. <i>Truth, Faithfulness, and Mercy.</i> | |

Of these fifty-two dramatic productions hardly one can be said to have survived, although there may be reason to believe that some of them formed the foundation of plays acted at a later period. Thus Peele's reputed play of *Mahomet and Hiren the fair Greek*, may have been a revival and alteration, with additions and improvements, of what is named in the preceding list the *History of a Greek Maid*. The *History of Error* was, possibly, the true source of Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*; and the *History of the Collier* there is ground to believe was the original of *Grim the Collier of Croydon*.¹

Love and Fortune was doubtless *The History of Love and*

¹ One of the plays mentioned under the date of 1600, in Henslowe's *Diary* (but omitted by Malone), is called *The Devil and his Dame*, and it is there attributed to William Haughton: this is doubtless no other than *Grim the Collier of Croydon*, the second title of which is *The Devil and his Dame*. It bears evident marks of greater antiquity than the year 1600, when Haughton was engaged upon it; and the Collier there is the same personage who had figured in Edwards's *Damon and Pythias*, for both describe themselves as 'Colliers to the King's own Majesty's mouth'. It also contains an allusion, in Act iv, scene 1, to Ulpian Fulwell's *Like will to Like*, first printed in 1568. It will be observed, that that part of the plot of *Grim the Collier of Croydon*, which relates to Grim, Joan, Clack the Miller, and Parson Shorthose, has no connexion with the rest of the story, and is, besides, in its language and style, older than the other parts of the piece, which are borrowed from Machiavel's *Novel of Belphegor*. This, we apprehend, was added by Haughton in 1600, when he also made some alterations in what relates to Grim and his companions, though he still preserved very many of the rhyming lines he found in the old copy, and which, as we have suggested, was perhaps the

Fortune, played at Windsor in 1582; but we cannot suppose that the first entry in the preceding enumeration, *Orestes*, was the drama, only recently discovered, and bearing for title *A New Enterlude of Vice, concerning the Historie of Horestes*, which was printed in 1567, although the dates very much correspond, because *Orestes* was represented at Windsor in 1568: the new discovery, *i.e.*, the printed play of *Horestes*, could never have been performed before any audience but one of the lowest description: even the title is cockneyfied, and the piece itself is full, not only of the most monstrous vulgarisms, but of the grossest buffoonery and most barefaced indecency. We do not suppose, that even the audiences at Court were then very scrupulous as to one or the other—indeed, we know that they were not; but it is out of the question to suppose that the offensive matter contained in *Horestes* could have been endured by any audience superior to one collected in Smithfield; and we may conclude therefore that, when performed, it could only have been at the Red Bull theatre, frequented by persons of the lowest and most uneducated description. It seems to have been called *A New Enterlude of Vice*, because the buffoon of our earlier drama figured in it conspicuously, and because the language put into his mouth by the author, John Pickering, was an exaggeration even of the licence formerly allowed to that applauded personage. The printer of the interlude was nevertheless a respectable bookseller, William Griffith, who had previously done especially good service to our old dramatic literature by publishing *Ralph Roister Doister*,

very same piece that had been performed before Queen Elizabeth, in 1576, by the Earl of Leicester's servants. This clue seems to explain the difficulties arising out of the discordance, especially in point of date, of many parts of *Grim the Collier of Croydon*. It was not printed until 1662, when it was attributed to J. T., but this might be, and probably was, only a guess by the bookseller.

Gammer Gurton's Needle, and *Gorboduc*: in the instance immediately before us, he was, possibly, not aware of the real character of the production to which he was giving publicity. Of course we are not about to revive any such objectionable matter, but we could not pass it by without notice, considering that the piece itself is an entire novelty in the history of our dramatic literature, and that it proves so distinctly the excess of vulgarity, and obscenity, to which the writers of dramas in that day sometimes condescended.

The characters in *Horestes* are numerous for that period—twenty-four; including, of course, the hero and heroine, Orestes and Clytemnestra, who are supported by the Vice, Nuntius (we give the names as they are spelt in the old printed copy), Menelaus, Nestor, Egistus, and Hermione, together with the emblematical representatives of Truth, Fame, Duty, Nature, and Council, besides certain characters named Haltersick, Hempstring, and Hodge, who furnish a comic portion of the performance; but the parts are so contrived and divided that only six actors, changing their dresses, on assuming different characters, were necessary. Of all these the Vice is principal and is most lawless in his actions and utterances, being introduced into the scene at any time when his assistance might be required to gratify the spectators with his noisy songs, coarse jokes, or irrelevant and ridiculous speeches. On most of these it is not necessary to dwell; but recollecting to what an early period the songs belong, that they importantly illustrate the condition of our early popular poetry, and that they are entire novelties, we cannot refuse, before we conclude this division of our undertaking, to extract one or two of the more characteristic: moreover, it is to be recollected that they are not confined to the Vice only; and the following is given as a duet between Clytemnestra and Egistus, not indeed united or in harmony, but in alternate verses. The song is the more

curious, because it establishes that the famous actor and ballad-singer Elderton was not the inventor of a tune that generally went by his name, and is more than once mentioned by Shakespeare : it relates to the popular subject of the Trojan war, and, as mere poetry, has little to recommend it : it is here called 'the tune of King Solomon', and how much older that tune may have been than the date of the drama in which it is found we have no means of knowing : it begins, as was not unusual, rather abruptly—

PARIS AND HELEN.

- 'And was it not a worthy sight
 Of Venus' child, kinge Priames sonne,
 To steale from Greece a ladye bryght,
 For whom the warres of Troy begon ;
 Naught fearing danger that might fall,
 Lady, ladie !
 From Greece to Troye he went withall ;
 My deare lady.
- 'When Paris first arrived there,
 Whereas dame Venus' worshyp is,
 And blustering fame abroad did beare
 His lyvely fame, she did not mys
 To Helena for to repayre,
 Her for to tell
 Of prayse and shape so trym and rare
 That did excell.
- 'Her beauty caused Paris payne,
 And bare chiefe sway within his mynde :
 No thinge was able to restraine
 His wyll some waye fourth to finde,
 Whereby he might have his desire,
 Lady, ladye !
 So great in him was Cupid's fyare,
 My deare ladye.

‘ And eke as Paris did desyre
 Fayre Helena for to possesse,
 Her hart, inflamed with lyke fyre,
 Of Paris’ love despaired no lesse ;
 And found occasion him to mete
 In Cytheron,
 When each of them dyd other grete
 To feast upon.

‘ If that in Paris Cupid’s shafte
 O, Clytemnestra ! take such place,
 That tyme no way he ever left
 Tyll he had got her comely grace ;
 I thinke my chance not ill to be,
 Ladye, ladye !
 That ventred lyfe to purchase thee,
 My dere ladye.

‘ King Priam’s sonne lovde not so sore
 The Grecian dame, the brother’s wyfe,
 But she his person esteemed more,
 Not for his sake saving her lyfe :
 Which caus’d her people to be slayne
 With him to flye,
 And he requight her love agayne
 Most faythfullye.

‘ And as he to recompence agayne
 The fayre quene Hellen for the same,
 So whyle I lyve will I take payne
 My wyll alwayes to yours to frame ;
 Syth that you have vouchsafte to be,
 Ladye, ladye !
 A Queen and ladye unto me,
 My deare ladye.

'And as she loved hym best, whyle lyfe
 Dyd last, so 'tend I you to do,
 Yf that devoyd of warre and stryfe,
 The Gods shall please to grant us to.
 Sith thou vouchsafst me for to take,
 O my good Knyght!
 And me thy ladye for to make
 My harts delyght.'

The above song, though thus introduced into a drama, had obviously, from its last verse, a personal application; and it is probable that it, and some others like it, were popular at the date when the interlude was first produced. The brief soldiers' song which follows was the earliest of its kind, and on that account chiefly we quote it: it is found in no collection of songs or ballads, and we are told by the author that the tune belonging to it was called *Over the Water to Florida*, which gives it an interesting historical application.

THE SOLDIERS' SONG.

'Farewell, adew that court like life;
 To war we 'tend to go:
 It is good sport to see the stryfe
 Of soldyers all arowe.
 How merily they forward march
 Their enemyes to slaye,
 With hay trym, and tryxy too,
 Their banners they displaye.
 'Now shall we have the golden cheates,
 When others want the same,
 And souldiers have full many feates
 Their enemyes to tame.
 With couching here and booming there,
 They break their foes array,
 And lusty lads amid the fieldes
 Their banners do displaye.

'The drum and flute play lustily,
The trumpet blows amayne,
And ventrous knights couragiously
Do march before their trayne.
With spear in rest, so lively drest
In armour bryghte and gaye,
With hey trym and trixey too,
Their banners they displaye.'

As this drama is almost alone in its kind, and has only very recently been brought to light, we make no apology for inserting the preceding quotations, though a little out of place, before we proceed with our more regular history. We could not omit all notice of it, and in most respects it could hardly be associated with any of the divisions in which we have necessarily treated a subject so various, interesting, and important. In one particular of construction this drama deserves a special note. In our *Annals of the Stage* we have had to mention emphatically the continued and vigorous hostility of the authorities of the City of London to dramatic performances; and yet this play, on every account so objectionable, concludes with a speech, epilogue, or prayer, put into the mouth of the character called Truth, soliciting the favour of Heaven, not only for the Queen, Council, and nobility, but for the Spirituality, and even for the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London. As at this period the course was nearly unprecedented, we quote the lines themselves:

'For your gentle presence we give you thanks
Hartely.
And therefore, our dewty wayed, let us all pray
For Elizabeth our Queene, whose gracious majestie
May rayne over us in helth for aye:
Lykewyse her Counsell; that eche of them maye

Have the spyryte of grace their doinges to dyrecte
 In settinge up vertue, and vyce to correcte.
 For all the nobyltye and spiritualtie let us praye :
 For judges and head officers, what ever they be :
 According to our boundant dewties, especially I saye,
 For my Lord Mayre, lyfetenaut of this noble Cytie,
 And for all his brytherne, with the comminaltie,
 That each of them, doinge their dewties aright,
 May, after death, possesse heaven to their hartes delyght.'

Yet there is perhaps no play in our language that, independently of the story, is more offensive on the score of morality and common decency.

A KNACK TO KNOW A KNAVE.—THE MISFORTUNES OF
 ARTHUR.—THE RARE TRIUMPHS OF LOVE AND FOR-
 TUNE.—ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

One fact we may consider decisively established—that between 1568 and 1580, the *Morals* represented bore but a small proportion to the *Tragedies*, *Comedies*, and *Histories*; but some time before the race of *Morals* was quite extinct, an attempt was made to unite in a five-act comedy, as had been previously done in interludes, the two species of performance. The title of this attempt is, *A Knack to know a Knave*; and although it was not printed until 1594,¹ we are warranted in supposing that, in the shape in which it now appears, it was written and acted prior to 1590: it is mentioned in Henslowe's accounts, not as a new piece, under the date 10th June 1592.

¹ Warton, who only seems to have been acquainted with its title, says that it was entered for publication on the Stationers' Books in January 1595 (*H. E. P.*, iv, 305, edit. 8vo), but the entry was, in fact, first made in September 1593, after it had been acted.

It was performed by his company (of which Edward Alleyn was the leader, and William Kemp then a principal member) only three times anterior to June 1592; and that circumstance may be accounted for, if we imagine that it was then a play which had not the recommendation of entire novelty. It may be doubted whether that portion of it, which in its nature and characters resembles a Moral, was not founded upon a considerably older performance.

The name of its author cannot now be recovered,¹ but the title-page informs us that it had been played 'sundry times by Ed. Allen and his company', and that it contained 'Kemp's applauded merriments of the men of Goteham'.² Kemp undoubtedly succeeded Tarlton, who died in September 1588; and Nash, in his *Almond for a Parrat*, printed probably in the next year, calls Kemp 'Jest-monger, and Vice-gerent general to the ghost of Dick Tarlton'. The play might, however, have been produced prior to the death of Tarlton,

¹ Malone, without a particle of evidence, in a MS. note to his copy of *A Knack to know a Knave*, assigns it to Robert Greene, who, he says, equally loosely, wrote most of the anonymous pieces prior to 1592. If it had been Greene's, the bookseller would hardly have failed to put the name of so popular a writer on the title-page. *A Knack to know an Honest Man*, printed in 1596, was written as a counterpart to *A Knack to know a Knave*, to which it is greatly inferior, and altogether unworthy of notice. *A Knack to know a Knave* was unquestionably extremely well liked by the audiences, and the phrase in the title was subsequently adopted by other writers: thus, in 1596, appeared a pamphlet called '*The Triall of True Friendship, etc.*'; otherwise, *A Knack to know a Knave, from an honest man, etc.* By M. B.'

² Ritson (*Bibl. Poet.*, 261) mentions Kemp's 'applauded merriments of the men of Goteham', entered on the Stationers' Books in 1593, apparently without being aware that they formed part of the play of *A Knack to know a Knave*. Kemp had been an author in 1587, when he printed 'a dutifull Invective against the most haynous Treasons of Ballard and Babington', etc.

and he may originally have acted in it, but certainly after 1586. The *dramatis personæ* consist both of abstract impersonations and historical characters; and the following belong to the former class, and are engaged more especially with that part of the play which resembles a Moral.

Honesty, employed in exposing crimes and vices.

Walter, representing the frauds, etc., of Farmers.

Priest, representing the vices of the Clergy.

Coneycatcher, representing the tricks of Cheats.

Perin, representing the offences of Courtiers.

The four last characters are supposed to be the sons of the old bailiff of Hexham, who is himself a sort of representative of the injustice practised by inferior magistrates: on his death-bed, early in the performance, he tells his sons, whom he has summoned round him—

‘Here have I been a bailiff threescore years,
And us’d exaction on the dwellers by;
For if a man were brought before my face
For cozenage, theft, or living on his wit,
For counterfeiting any hand or seal,
The matter heard, the witness brought to me,
I took a bribe and set the prisoners free.
So by such dealings I have got my wealth.’

When he dies, the stage-direction is, ‘Enter a devil, and carry him away’; and the whole of this portion of the performance is a severe and somewhat coarse satire on the reigning iniquities of Court and country. This is not the only time when the devil makes his appearance in the play for the sake of pleasing the mob, and in strict conformity with the practice of the older Morals. To show the general nature of the satire, the following, from one of the prose speeches of *Honesty*, may be quoted—

'Tis strange to see how men of honesty are troubled many times with subtle knavery; for they have so many cloaks to cover their abuses, that Honesty may well suspect them, but dares not detect them: for if I should, they have by their knavery got so many friends, that though never so bad, they will stand in defence with the best. I was at the water-side, where I saw such deceit, I dare not say knavery, in paying and receiving custom for outlandish ware, that I wondered to see, yet durst not complain of: the reason was, they were countenanced with men of great wealth, richer than I a great deal, but not honest. Then I went into the markets, where I saw petty knavery in false measuring corn, and in scales that wanted no less than two ounces in the pound. But all this was nothing, scant worth the talking of; but when I came to the Exchange, I espied in a corner of an aisle an arch cozener—a coney-catcher, I mean—which used such gross cozening as you would wonder to hear.'

In the end Honesty exposes the wickedness of all classes to the King, and they are punished according to the character of their offences. The chief historical personages in the play are—Edgar, King of England; Bishop Dunstan; Ethenwald, Earl of Cornwall; Osrick, an old lord, and Alfrida his daughter.

Edgar, on the report of the beauty of Alfrida, sends Ethenwald to court her in his name: he arrives in the evening, and thus picturesquely describes the approach of night.

'The night draws on,
And Phoebus is declining towards the west.
Now shepherds bear their flocks into the folds,
And wint'ed oxen, fodder'd in their stalls,
Now leave to feed, and 'gin to take their rest:
Black dusky clouds environ round the globe,
And heaven is cover'd with a sable robe.'

Ethenwald, who has previously seen Alfrida, and is in love

with her, grieves bitterly that he cannot court the lady for himself, and afterwards Osrick introduces him to his innocent and unconscious daughter. Ethenwald complains that 'a painful rheum' afflicts his eyes, and that he cannot look up :

Osrick.—I am sorry that my house should cause your grief.—
 Daughter, if you have any skill at all,
 I pray you use your cunning with the Earl,
 And see if you can ease him of his pain.

Alfrida.—Father, such skill as I receiv'd of late
 By reading many pretty penn'd receipts,
 Both for the ache of head and pain of eyes,
 I will, if so it please the Earl to accept it,
 Endeavour what I may to comfort him.—
 My Lord, I have waters of approved worth,
 And such as are not common to be found,
 Any of which, if please your honour use them,
 I am in hope will help you to your sight.

Ethenwald.—No, matchless Alfrida, they will do me no good,
 For I am troubled only when I look.

Alfrida.—On what, my Lord? on whom?

Ethenwald.—I cannot tell.

Alfrida.—Why, let me see your eyes, my Lord : look upon me.

Ethenwald.—Then 'twill be worse.

Alfrida.—What ! if you look on me? Then I'll begone.

Ethenwald.—Nay, stay, sweet love, stay, beauteous Alfrida,
 And give the Earl of Cornwall leave to speak.
 Know, Alfrida, thy beauty hath subdued
 And captivate the Earl of Cornwall's heart.
 Briefly, I love thee, seem I ne'er so bold,
 So rude and rashly to prefer my suit ;
 And if your father give but his consent,
 Eas'd be that pain that troubles Ethenwald :
 And this considered, Osrick shall prove
 My father, and his daughter be my love.—

Speak quick, Osrick—shall I have her or no?

Osrick.—My Lord, with all my heart : you have my consent,
If so my daughter please to condescend.

Ethenwald.—But what saith Alfrida?

Alfrida.—I say, my Lord, that seeing my father grants,
I will not gainsay what his age thinks meet.
I do appoint myself, my Lord, at your dispose.'

The blank-verse sometimes halts a little, often owing to the errors of the printer, which in many places are obvious. Ethenwald reports to Edgar that Alfrida is well enough for an Earl, but not sufficiently beautiful for a King: Edgar disbelieves him, and visiting Osrick to ascertain the truth, Ethenwald endeavours to pass off the kitchen-maid upon the king, as Alfrida. The trick is detected, and by the advice of Dunstan forgiven, Edgar generously renouncing his attachment in favour of Ethenwald.

'Kemp's applauded merriments' in this play 'of the men of Goteham, in receiving the King into Goteham', consist only of a single scene of ignorant blundering and contention, whether a smith or a cobbler should deliver a mock-petition to the King regarding the consumption of ale. 'Merriment' seems to have been a technical term for a piece of theatrical buffoonery; and Nash, in his *Apology of Pierce Penniless*, 1593, after abusing Gabriel Harvey as 'a rope-maker' and 'a clown', warns him lest Will Kemp should make 'a merriment' of him; referring, possibly, to the very merriment in the play before us. As we are not aware that any other distinct specimen under the name of a 'Merriment' exists, it may be worth while to quote it; but certainly for that reason only, as it shows how much must have been left to the *extempore* resources and grimace of the performers, to render such an exhibition at all laughable, as it stands in this drama.

‘[*Enter mad men of Goteham ; to wit, a Miller, a Cobbler, and a Smith.*]

Miller.—Now let us consult among ourselves, how to misbehave ourselves to the King’s worship, Jesus bless him ! and when he comes, to deliver him this petition. I think the Smith were best to do it, for he’s a wise man.

Cobbler.—Neighbour, he shall not do it, as long as Jeffery, the translator, is mayor of the town.

Smith.—And why, I pray ? Because I would have put you from the mace ?

Miller.—No, not for that, but because he is no good fellow ; nor he will not spend his pot for company.

Smith.—Why, sir, there was a god of our occupation ; and I charge you, by virtue of his godhead, to let me deliver the petition.

Cobbler.—But soft you : your god was a cuckold, and his godhead was the horn ; and that’s the arms of the godhead you call upon. Go ; you are put down with your occupation, and now I will not grace you so much as to deliver the petition for you.

Smith.—What ! dispraise our trade ?

Cobbler.—Nay, neighbour, be not angry, for I’ll stand to nothing only but this—

Smith.—But what ?—Bear witness a gives me the but, and I am not willing to shoot.—Cobbler, I will talk with you. Nay, my bellows, my coal-trough, and my water shall enter arms with you for our trade.—O neighbour ! I cannot bear it, and I will not hear it.

Miller.—Hear you, neighbour : I pray conswade yourself and be not wilful, and let the Cobbler deliver it—you shall see him mar all.

Smith.—At your request I will commit myself to you, and lay myself open to you like an oyster.

Miller.—I’ll tell him what you say.—Hear you, neighbour : we have constulted to let you deliver the petition : do it wisely for the credit of the town.

Cobbler.—Let me alone ; for the King’s tarminger [harbinger ?] was here : he says the King will be here anon. [Trumpet.]

Smith.—But hark ! By the mass, he comes.

[*Enter the King, Dunstan, Perin.*

King.—How now, Perin ! who have we here ?

Cobbler.—We, the townsmen of Goteham,
Hearing your grace would come this way,
Did think it good for you to stay,
(But hear you, neighbours ; bid somebody ring the bells,)
And we are come to you alone
To deliver our petition.

King.—What is it, Perin ? I pray thee read.

Perin.—Nothing but to have a licence to brew strong ale thrice a week ; and he that comes to Goteham and will not spend a penny on a pot of ale, if he be a-dry, that he may fast.

King.—Well, sirs, we grant your petition.

Cobbler.—We humbly thank your royal majesty.

King.—Come, Dunstan, let's away.'

[*Exeunt.*

This is the whole of what makes such a figure on the title-page, and no doubt it was rendered conspicuous there, in order to promote the sale of the play, as Kemp in his day was nearly as great a popular favourite as Tarleton had been before him. The epilogue to *A Knack to know a Knave* was spoken by Honesty, the severe part assigned in all probability to Alleyn, the manager of Henslowe's Company.

The History of Sir Clyomon and Clamydes, though printed in 1599, is, indisputably, considerably older than *A Knack to know a Knave* of 1594: the latter is a mixture of History and Moral, but the former is a combination of Romance and Moral, in which the departure from the elder species of drama is, in some respects, less distant ; for even a Vice, called Subtle-shift, is employed in a capacity very similar to that of the Vice in the Moral of *Common Conditions*. In fact, the two pieces, *Sir Clyomon and Clamydes* and *Common Conditions*, belong nearly to the same class, with the exception that the latter was merely what was called an 'interlude': both consist

very much of the loves and adventures of knights-errant, and in both characters, originally belonging only to *Morals*, are inserted. In *Sir Clyomon and Clamydes*, besides the Vice, there is a personification of Rumour, who conveys intelligence to different parties; and the descent of God's Providence, also personified, saves the life of one of the heroines. The whole performance bears marks of considerable antiquity—it is almost entirely in long rhymes of fourteen syllables, and Alexander the Great,¹ who is made contemporary with his vassals, the Kings of Denmark and Suavia, talks much in the style of Herod in the old Miracle-plays: this may be seen in the subsequent brief extract—

‘What fort, or force, or castle strong have I not battered downe,
What Prince is he that now by me his princely seate and crowne
Doth not acknowledge for to hold? Not one the world throughout
But of King Alexander's power they all do stand in doubt.
They feare as fowles that hovering flie from out the fawcon's way,
As lambe the lyon; so my power the stowtest do obey.
In field who hath not felt my force, where battering blowes abound?
King or Keysar, who hath not fixt his knees to me on ground?’

The piece itself is an absurd jumble of improbabilities, with a variety of adventures of love and war, by land and by sea: in order to multiply them, a cowardly enchanter, named Bryan Sansfoy, is employed, who keeps a dreadful dragon in the ‘Forest of Marvels’, which, of course, is to be conquered by one of the knights, and the head presented to the lady of his love. After it has been slain by Clamydes, Bryan Sansfoy casts him asleep, puts on his armour, hastens to the Court of Denmark, and imposes himself upon Juliana (the mistress of Clamydes), as her true knight. When Clamydes, just afterwards, arrives, she and her friend refuse to acknowledge him

¹ His entrance is thus marked—‘Enter King Alexander the Great, as valiantly set forth as may be, and as many souldiers as can.’

until, a tournament to settle the dispute being appointed, cowardly Sansfoy, rather than fight, admits the fraud he has practised. The reconcilment of Clamydes and Juliana is very cordial and sudden—

Juliana.—Is this Clamydes? ah! worthy knight, then do forgive thy deere,

And welcome eke ten thousand times unto thy lady heere.

Clamydes.—Ah! my Juliana bright, what's past I do forgive,

For well I see thou constant art; and whilst that I do live,

For this my firmed faith in thee I ever will repose.

Juliana.—O father, now I do deny that wretch; and do amongst my foes

Recount him for his treason wrought.'

The only portion of the play which has the slightest pretension to literary merit relates to a different pair of lovers, Sir Clyomon and Neronis, the daughter of the king of 'the Island of Strange Marshes'. She disguises herself as a page, and follows Sir Clyomon, encountering a variety of hardships, and acting also at one time as the servant of her knight. The following is part of a soliloquy given to her, in a peculiar lyrical measure, with a reduplication of rhymes—

'How can that tree, but withered be,
That wanteth sap to moist the roote?
How can that vine, but waste and pine,
Whose plants are troden under foote?
How can that spray, but soone decay,
That is with wild weeds overgrowne?
How can that wight in ought delight,
Which showes and hath no good will shone?'

It is almost impossible to suppose that such a performance could have been represented at, or even near, the date when it was published. *Romeo and Juliet* had just been reprinted!

It has been shown in the *Annals of the Stage* that between 1580 and 1590 the Queen and Court were principally entertained by public performers who acted under her name, or under the names of some of her chief nobility: the plays were usually chosen by the Master of the Revels from among those which various companies were in the habit of exhibiting before popular audiences; but the Inns of Court now and then volunteered their services for the representation, in the presence of the Queen, of some play which had been written and got up by their members. The gentlemen of Gray's Inn especially distinguished themselves in this manner at various periods; and on the 28th of February 1587, they acted at Greenwich a tragedy, which ought not to be passed over without especial notice. The main body of the piece was written by a student of Gray's Inn named Thomas Hughes, and it is called *The Misfortunes of Arthur*:¹ it is on all accounts a remarkable production; and so well did Lord Bacon (then a member of Gray's Inn, in his twenty-eighth year) think of it, that he condescended to assist in the invention and preparation of the dumb-shows by which the performance was varied and illustrated. His coadjutors in this duty were Christopher Yelverton (who, more than twenty years before, had furnished an epilogue to Gascoyne's *Focasta*) and a person of the name of John Lancaster. An 'Introduction' was contributed by Nicholas Trotte (neither of them a very poetical name) also of Gray's Inn, and additional speeches and choruses were prepared by William Fulbecke

¹ The Duke of Devonshire has a copy of it in his collection (formerly belonging to John Philip Kemble): the only other known is among the Garrick plays in the Museum. In 1598, according to Henslowe's *Diary*, Richard Hathway wrote a play under the title of *The Life of Arthur, King of England*, possibly some revival of the piece before us, as *Ferrex and Porrex* had already been revived by a different hand.

and Francis Flower. The general plan of the piece resembles that of the celebrated work of Sackville and Norton; and although, as in *Ferrex and Porrex*, the unities of time and place are violated, the author of *The Misfortunes of Arthur* has endeavoured to adhere to most of the forms observed by the Greeks and Romans: his object was, perhaps, by a stricter rule of composition, to distinguish his tragedy from such as were at that date popular, and were represented by ordinary players. With the latter, action sometimes supplied the place of dialogue, but here dialogue and description supply the place of action: little or nothing is done upon the stage, and the most decisive battles are represented in narrative by a 'weighty Nuntius'.

The story is this:—Arthur, having gone into Gaul with a large army to resist the demand of tribute made by Rome, has left his kingdom of England under the government of his Queen Guenevora and Mordred, his son, who had been borne to him by his sister Anna. Mordred revolts from his allegiance, and makes successful love to his step-mother, Guenevora: to maintain his usurpation, he engages the Irish, Picts, Normans, and Saxons on his side, and resists the landing of Arthur at Dover, where Mordred is defeated and driven into Cornwall: another engagement occurs there, and, after much slaughter on both sides, Arthur kills Mordred, and Mordred Arthur. Guenevora withdraws into a convent, when she hears of the return of Arthur, and there she remains. The plot, therefore, in itself is sufficiently disagreeable, and full of adultery, incest, and murder, and the author has not rendered it more inviting by the manner in which he has treated it. Nevertheless, Hughes was certainly a man of very considerable talent: his language is often vigorous, his thoughts striking and natural, and his blank-verse (in which the whole production, with the exception of two rhyming

choruses, is written) more rich, varied and harmonious, than that of any dramatic author who preceded him as a writer of plays not designed for popular exhibition. It is to be recollected, however, that in 1587 Hughes might have had the example of Christopher Marlow before him, who had perhaps produced his *Tamberlaine* upon the public stage. Such lines as the following are, both in sentiment and expression, superior to any that can be pointed out in *Ferrex and Porrex*, or *Jocasta*. They are an apostrophe by Arthur to England, when, on his return a conqueror from Gaul, he finds that he must still continue in arms and fight for his throne upon the bosom of his native country.

‘Thou soil, which erst Diana did ordain
The certain seat and bower of wandering Brute ;
Thou realm, which aye I reverence as my saint,
Thou stately Britain, th’ ancient type of Troy,
Bear with my forced wrongs !—I am not he
That willing would impeach thy peace with wars.’

Again, after the last battle, in which Mordred is slain and Arthur mortally wounded, the latter, with his dying breath, exclaims—

‘Well, so it was : it cannot be redress’d ;
The greater is my grief that sees it so.
My life, I feel, doth fade, and sorrows flow,
The rather that my name is thus extinct.
In this respect, so Mordred did succeed,
Oh, that myself had fallen and Mordred liv’d !
That having conquer’d all my foes but him,
I might have left you him that conquer’d me.
Oh, heavy wretched lot, to be the last
That falls !—To view the burial of my realm,
Where each man else hath felt his several fate,
I only pine oppress’d with all their fates !’

Here the pauses are skilfully managed and judiciously introduced, although we find no other marked symptoms of improvement beyond the general fluency of the rhythm. The character of Mordred is powerfully drawn, and his ambition, reckless fury, and youthful confidence, are well contrasted with the milder, more cautious, but not less courageous nature of his father. In a scene in Act i, where his friend Conan warns him against the wrong he was about to offer to his sire, Mordred bursts out—

‘Come son, come sire, I first prefer myself;
And since a wrong must be, then it excels
When ’tis to gain a crown. I hate a peer:
I loathe, I irk, I do detest a head!
Be it nature, be it reason, be it pride,
I love to rule! My mind nor with, nor by,
Nor after any claims, but chief and first!’

Afterwards, in Act ii, adverting to Arthur’s courage and conquests, he says—

‘He that envies the valour of his foe
Detects a want of valour in himself.
He fondly fights, that fights with such a foe,
Where ’twere a shame to lose, no praise to win;
But with a famous foe, succeed what will,
To win is great renown, to lose less foil.
His conquests, were they more, dismay me not:
The oftner they have been, the more they threat;
No danger can be thought both safe and oft;
And who hath oftner waged wars than he?
Escapes secure him not—he owes the price.
Whom chance hath often miss’d chance hits at length;
Or if that chance hath further’d his success,
So may she mine—for chance hath made me King!’

Macbeth, it will be recollected (Act i, scene 3), congratulates

himself that 'chance will have him king'; and expresses his hope that chance would 'further his success', and crown him. The resemblance is somewhat remarkable.

In the same scene, Gawin, one of Mordred's allies, reminds him of the peril of defeat to which he exposed himself; and Mordred replies, in a noble spirit of daring—

'I bear no breast so unprepar'd for harms.
Ev'n that I hold the kingliest point of all
To brook misfortunes well; and by how much
The more his state and tott'ring empire swags,
To fix so much the faster foot on ground.
No fear but doth forejudge, and many fall
Into their fate, while they do fear their fate.
Where courage quails, the fear exceeds the harm :
Yea, worse than war itself is fear of war.'

It cannot be denied that Hughes is here and there indebted to Seneca and others for some of his thoughts, as in the last line, which is the well-known *pejor est bello timor ipse belli* of the chorus to Act iii of *Thyestes*. It will, however, not be disputed, that the lines quoted must have been the work of a man of no common power; and that a piece which contains such passages, and many more scarcely inferior, deserves to be rescued from oblivion. Of the Thomas Hughes, of that date, we believe, nothing more is known, than that he was 'one of the Society of Gray's Inn'.

Two years after the above tragedy had been played and printed, another piece, of a very different character, was published, which also, on the title-page, professes to have been performed in the presence of the Queen. It is a production of the utmost rarity, only one copy of it being known;¹ but in point of positive merit as a drama, it would require a com-

¹ It is in the collection at Bridgewater-House.

paratively brief notice. It is entitled *The rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune*,¹ and the principal design of the author seems to have been, to compose a Court entertainment, which should at least possess the requisites of show and variety. The best portion may be considered the induction, in which Jupiter, Juno, and all the Gods and Goddesses are either exhibited or engaged, together with the Fury Tisiphone: the first stage direction shows the nature of the assembly, which must be supposed to take place on Olympus:—‘Enter Mercury: then riseth a Fury: then enter the assembly of the Gods; Jupiter with Juno; Apollo with Minerva; Mars and Saturn; after, Vulcan with Venus. The Fury sets debate amongst them, and after Jupiter speaks as followeth.’

He demands the reason of ‘this mutiny’, not at first seeing Tisiphone: at last he perceives her, and asks—

‘Thou Fury fell,
Bred in the dungeon of the deepest hell,
Who causeth thee to show thy selfe in light?
And what thy message is, I charge thee tell upright.’

By far the greater part of the production is in rhyme, intermixed with prose, the blank-verse being confined to the induction: even here, as is proved by the passage just quoted, rhymes are frequent. It will be seen hereafter, when speaking of Marlow, that we attribute to him the introduction of blank-verse upon the public stage perhaps two years before this piece was printed; and judging merely from internal evidence, we are inclined to believe, that the induction, some interlocutory matter

¹ The full title runs as follows:—‘*The Rare Triumphes of Love and Fortune*. Plaide before the Queenes most excellent Majestie: wherein are many fine Conceites with great delight. At London. Printed by E. A. for Edward White, and are to be solde at the little North doore of S. Paules Church, at the signe of the Gunne. 1589. 4to.’ B. 1.

between the acts (for it has five regular divisions), and the conclusion, were of more recent authorship than the main body of the story.¹ This circumstance will account for the insertion of blank-verse, which was then fast superseding rhyme. The measure, whether blank-verse or rhyme, is often extremely careless and irregular, as may be seen from the opening of the reply of Tisiphone to the above demand of Jupiter :

‘O Jupiter, thou dreadfull king, of gods and men the father hie,
To whose commaund the heavens, the earth, and lowest hell obey,
Tysiphone, the daughter of eternall night,
Bred in the bottome of the deepest pit of hell,
Brought up in blood, and cherisht with scrauling snakes,
Tormenting therewithall the damned soules of them
Heer upon earth, that carelesse live of thy commaundement.—
I am the same.’

It is clear that these lines have been ill regulated by the printer:—they would run better thus ; but still no change, without a change of words, would make measure of part of what is above quoted.

‘O Jupiter, thou dreadfull king, of gods
And men the father hie, to whose commaund
The heavens, the earth, and lowest hell obey,
Tysiphone, the daughter of eternall night,
Bred in the bottom of the deepest pitt of hell,
Brought up in blood and cherisht with scrauling snakes,
Tormenting therewithall the damned soules
Of them heer upon earth, that carelesse live
Of thy commaundement—I am the same.’

After delivering this answer, she proceeds in a new measure of twelve-syllable blank-verse :

¹ ‘A *History of Love and Fortune* was played before Elizabeth in 1582. See the *Annals of the Stage* of that date.

‘I am the same whom both my lothsom sisters hate,
Whom hell itself complaines to keep within her race.
Whom every fearfull soule detesteth with a curse.’

She then relates, in the same measure, that she had been sent to Olympus by Pluto, ‘King of hell and golden mines’, to complain that Venus had proudly endeavoured to destroy the power of Fortune, in order that she might be thought ‘the only goddess of the world’. Jupiter requires to hear Fortune in reply, and while Tisiphone is gone to hell for her, and in her absence, calls upon Venus for her justification, in ten-syllable rhymes. She asserts her superiority in alternate twelve and fourteen-syllable lines, and denies the power of Fortune over the mind:—

‘Yet divers things there be that Fortune cannot tame,
As are the riches of the minde, or else an honest name,
Or a contented hart, still free from Fortune’s power.’

Fortune, when she arrives, maintains her original accusation; after which, at the bidding of Jupiter, Mercury exhibits six dumb shows of persons slain by Love or Fortune, viz., Troilus and Cressida, Alexander, Dido, Pompey, Cæsar, and Hero and Leander. Music was, it seems, played during the silent spectacle.

In the intervals between each show, Mercury interprets and explains, while Vulcan comments with some humour, but more grossness, sometimes alluding to the manners of the day; as, for instance, of Cæsar and Pompey he observes,

‘They were served well enough: why could not they be content
With a roche and a red herring in the holy time of Lent?’

from whence we may, perhaps, infer that the piece was performed before the Queen, as was customary, at Shrovetide. Venus and Fortune afterwards renew the contention, and Jupiter thus interposes:—

'Content ye both, I'll hear no more of this ;
 And, Mercury, surcease, call out no more.
 I have bethought me how to worke their wishe,
 As you have often prov'd it heertofore.
 Heere in this land, within that princely bower,
 There is a Prince beloved of his love,
 On whom I meane your soverainties to prove.
 Venus, for that thy love, thy sweet delight,
 Thou shalt endure to encrease their joy,
 And, Fortune, thou to manifest thy might,
 Their pleasures and their pastimes thou shalt destroye,
 Overthwarting them with newes of freshe anoye :
 And she that most can please them or dispight,
 I will confirme to be of greatest might.'

The Prince and 'his love' are Hermione, a young courtier so named, and Fidelity, daughter to Duke Phizantius ; and then follows a silly, meagre story (commencing with the second act) of Fidelity's escape from her father's court, in search of her lover who had been banished, and who has taken shelter with an old necromancer called Bomelio, who afterwards turns out to be the father of Hermione. Fidelity is pursued by her brother Armenio, who is struck dumb by Bomelio, and subsequently restored to speech by the blood of Fidelity, flowing from a slight wound inflicted by her own father. In the end Hermione and Fidelity are united, all parties are reconciled, and the old magician, having lost his books (which were taken away by his son and destroyed) renounces his art. At the ends of the acts, the triumphs of Venus and Fortune are alternately sounded by different instruments, as each goddess has been successful in aiding or defeating the lovers : the success of Venus is celebrated by 'a noise of viols', while 'trumpets, drums, cornets, and guns' resound for Fortune. The best lines in that part of the performance

which relates to the lovers are the following, portion of a soliloquy by Bomelio.

‘ Now weary lay thee downe thy fortune to fulfill,
Goe, yeeld thee captive to thy care to save thy life, or spill.
The pleasures of the feelde, the prospect of delight,
The blooming trees, the chirping birdes, are greevous to thy sight ;
The holly craggy rocke, the shriking owle to see,
To heare the noyse of serpentes hisse—that is thy hermony.
For as unto the sicke all pleasure is in vaine,
So mirth unto the wounded minde encreaseth but his pain.’

The piece ends with a speech from Fortune, who has been reconciled to Venus by Jupiter, and who compliments Queen Elizabeth in a strain of less adulation than usual.

There is a species of dramatic representation, different from any of which we have yet spoken, and which may be said to form a class of itself:—it may be called domestic tragedy, and pieces of this kind were of old founded upon then comparatively recent events in our own country. Of these several are extant, such as *Arden of Feversham*, the story of which relates to a murder committed in the reign of Edward VI; *A Warning for Fair Women*, arising out of a similar event in 1573; *Two Tragedies in one*, part of which is founded upon the assassination of a merchant of London of the name of Beech, by a person called Thomas Merry,¹ and *The Fair Maid*

¹ This play was by Robert Yarrington, and it deserves notice, inasmuch as two different stories, occurring in two distant countries, England and Italy, are brought into one play, forming a double plot, without the slightest connection between the two. One of them, as is stated above, dramatically relates the events connected with the murder of a Mr. Beech, in Thames Street; and the other is upon the story of *The Babes in the Wood*, the difference being, that in the latter there was only one child concerned, instead of two. The scene alternates, exactly at the will of the author, between England and Italy: it was printed in 1601; but the

of *Bristol*, which had its origin also in a recent tragical incident: indeed, it seems to have been the constant practice of the dramatists of that day, to avail themselves (like the ballad-makers) of any circumstances of the kind, which attracted attention, in order to construct them into a play, often treating the subject merely as a dramatic narrative of a known occurrence, without embellishing, or aiding it with the ornaments of invention. Shakespeare was concerned, at least, in one production of this description, *The Yorkshire Tragedy* (founded upon an event in 1604), which was played at the Globe theatre, and printed with our great poet's name in 1608. The internal evidence, however, of Shakespeare's authorship is nearly as strong as the external, and there are some speeches which could scarcely have proceeded from any other pen.¹ It

murder of Beech had been adopted as the subject for another play, by Haughton and Day, as appears by Henslowe's *Diary*, where in one place it is called *The Tragedy of Thomas Merry*, and in another, *Mr. Beech's Tragedy*, under the date of November 1599. Henslowe's MS. also contains traces of several other pieces of the same kind, as *The Stepmother's Tragedy*, *The Tragedy of John Cox of Collumpton*, *The Lamentable Tragedy of Page of Plymouth*, *Black Bateman of the North*, etc., etc. *The Lamentable Tragedy of Page of Plymouth*, which he found in Henslowe's *Diary* spelt in various ways, puzzled Malone past his finding out; but had he only turned to the works of Taylor the Water Poet, 1630, fol., p. 135, a book he has over and over again quoted, he would have found all his difficulty removed; for there, in reference to a recent murder by a person of the name of John Rowse, Taylor says, 'Arden of Feversham, and Page of Plymouth, both their murders are fresh in memory, and the fearful ends of their wives and aiders in those bloody actions, will never be forgotten.' *The Lamentable Tragedy of Page of Plymouth* was, in fact, nothing more than a play, like *Arden of Feversham*, founded upon an actual occurrence—the murder of a father by his daughter and her lover whose marriage he had resisted. Several narrative poems were printed on the occasion, and more than one lost play was written upon the story. Ben Jonson had a hand in one of them.

¹ This, however, has not been the general opinion of the commentators,

has been also said in comparatively modern times, and by no incompetent judge perhaps, that he was the author of another of the domestic tragedies, the titles of which we have mentioned—*Arden of Feversham*, which was first printed anonymously in 1592, and had been performed a year or two earlier; so that if our great dramatist had had anything to do with it, it must have been one of his very earliest compositions: it was reprinted in 1599 and 1633. *The Warning*

though of late years it has been printed with the undoubted productions of our great poet. The story is very simply treated, according to the facts which were then public, and which had been put into the form of a ballad, and sung about the streets. We doubt if Shakespeare would have taken such a subject of his own choice; but perhaps he yielded to the necessity of the case, and therefore contributed this one of four short plays presented on the same night. It is to be remarked, that it is the only one of the four that has been preserved: the three others, being by persons of less note, the bookseller, perhaps, did not think it would be to his advantage to publish, when he printed *The Yorkshire Tragedy* as the work of Shakespeare in 1608. We refer especially to the first speech of the wife, when she is lamenting over the ruin her husband is bringing upon his family by his passion for gaming, beginning,—

‘What will become of us? All will away!
My husband never ceases in expense,
Both to consume his credit and his house;
And ’tis set down by Heaven’s just decree,
That riot’s child must needs be beggary,’ etc.

The lines in a subsequent speech, by the husband,—

‘Divines and dying men may talk of hell,
But in my heart her several torments dwell,’

are borrowed from Nash’s *Pierce Penniless’ Supplication*, 1593, of which the commentators were not aware. S. N., whoever he might be, who wrote *Acolastus his Afterwitte* in 1600, stole these two lines, among his other manifold and barefaced plagiaries, some of them from *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*:—he says,

‘If on the earth there may be found a Hell,
Within my soule her several torments dwell.’

for *Fair Women*,¹ might be given to Shakespeare on grounds far more plausible than those applicable to *Arden of Feversham*. As *Arden of Feversham* is the earliest printed specimen of

¹ The *Warning for Fair Women* was printed in 1599, but is certainly considerably older. It relates to the murder of a London merchant of the name of Sanders, by Brown, the paramour of his wife, and we here find several striking resemblances to passages in Shakespeare's undisputed plays. Before he assassinates Sanders, Brown thus invokes the night—

‘Oh, sable night, sit on the eye of heaven,
That it discern not this black deed of darkness!’

Everybody will recollect the passage in *Macbeth* (Act iii, scene 2), beginning—

‘Come seeling night,
Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day,’ etc.

Again, after the murder, Brown says—

‘I gave him fifteen wounds,
Which now be fifteen mouths that do accuse me:
In every wound there is a bloody tongue,
Which will all speak, although he hold his peace.’

Compare this with Antony's speech in *Julius Cæsar*, (Act iii, scene 2)—

‘Show you sweet Cæsar's wounds, poor, poor dumb mouths, etc.
————— and put a tongue
In every wound of Cæsar,’ etc.

A third parallel passage, as it may truly be called, is to be found later in the play, where Anne Sanders entreats a Mrs. Drewry, an accomplice, not to betray her—

‘Now is the hour come
To put your love unto the touch, to try
If it be current or but counterfeit—’

which will instantly bring to mind the address of Richard III (Act iv, scene 2) to Buckingham—

‘Now do I play the touch,
To try if thou be current gold indeed.’

But the resemblance in *A Warning for Faire Women* is not merely verbal: the speeches of Anne Sanders, the repentant wife, in the following extract, are Shakespearean in a much better sense: but for the

this species of drama, and as upon all accounts it deserves attention, we adopt it as an illustration of this part of our subject; not meaning, however, at all to be understood to join in the absolute conclusion that Shakespeare had a hand in it, although it contains characters strongly drawn, and some passages of no mean rank in the scale of poetry.

I have already said that the event on which it was founded occurred in the reign of Edward VI,¹ and perhaps it was

extreme rarity of this tragedy, it might long ere now have been attributed to Shakespeare. Here we say, *aut Shakespeare aut diabolus*.

Drewry.—See where Master Brown is: in him take comfort,
And learn to temper your excessive grief.

Anne.—Ah, bid me feed on poison and be fat,
Or look upon the basilisk and live;
Or surfeit daily and be still in health,
Or leap into the sea and not be drown'd.
All these are even as possible as this,
That I should be recomfited by him
That is the author of my whole lament.

Browne.—Why, mistress Anne, I love you dearly;
And but for your incomparable beauty,
My soul had never dreamt of Sanders' death.
Then give me that which now I do deserve,
Yourself, your love; and I will be to you
A husband so devote as none more just,
Or more affectionate shall tread this earth.

Anne.—If you can crave it of me with a tongue
That hath not been profan'd with wicked vows,
Or think it in a heart did never harbour
Pretence of murder, or put forth a hand
As not contaminate with shedding blood,
Then will I willingly grant your request.
But, oh! your hand, your heart, your tongue, and eye,
Are all presenters of my misery.'

¹ The name ought, perhaps, properly to be written *Arderne of Fever-sham*, as we find it in the following extract from the Registers of the

brought upon the stage as early as the year 1578, when *Murderous Michael* was performed before the Queen, Michael being a very prominent personage, and one of the assassins of Arden. Possibly the play, as it was printed in 1592, might be founded upon this elder performance, although Michael, in *Arden of Feversham*, is one of the least guilty of the party concerned in the murder. His character may be judged from the following speech, when contemplating the murder of Arden, his master—

‘ Conflicting thoughts encamped in my breast
 Awake me with the echo of their strokes,
 And I, a judge to censure either side,
 Can give to neither wished victory. . . .
 That grim-fac’d villain, pityless Black-Will,
 And Shakebag, stern in bloody stratagem,
 Have sworn my death if I infringe my vow,
 A dreadful thing to be consider’d of.
 Methinks, I see them with their bolster’d hair,
 Staring and grinning in thy gentle face ;
 And in their ruthless hands their daggers drawn
 Insulting o’er thee with a peck of oaths,
 Whilst thou submissive, pleading for relief,
 Art mangled by their ireful instruments.
 Methinks I hear them ask where Michael is?
 And pityless Black Will cries “ Stab the Slave !
 The peasant will detect the tragedy.”

Privy Council, under date of 15th of June 1551, the murder upon which the tragedy is founded having been perpetrated in that year.—‘A letter to Sir William Godolphine, knight, of thanks for his diligence in the apprehension of Black Will, that killed Mr. Arderne of Feversham, and to sende him saufe-guarde, with promise of payment for the charges of the bringers.’ We are informed that some memorials of the murder still exist at Feversham.

The wrinkles in his foul death-threatening face
Gape open wide, like graves, to swallow men.'¹

Here, with some mixture of absurdity, there is unquestionably poetry, both in the outset and conclusion, although, without much regard to propriety, it is put into the mouth of a menial. Here Jacob missed at least as strong a proof as any he has adduced of Shakespeare's instrumentality in this play, in the use of the word 'bolstered', in the line,—

'Methinks, I see them with their bolster'd hair,'

which, though spelt somewhat differently, would have afforded a useful illustration of the 'blood *bolter'd* Banquo' in *Macbeth* (Act iv, sc. 1), much wanted by the commentators, who could find no instance of the use of such a word in any other author: for 'bolster'd' we might perhaps read *bolter'd*.

The plot of the tragedy is merely this:—Alice, the wife of Arden, a merchant of Feversham, is in love with Mosbie, a man of low extraction, in the same place: they determine upon the murder of Arden; and when he goes to London on business, they employ three assassins, Black-Will, Shakebag, and Greene, together with Michael, Arden's own servant, for the purpose. The attempt fails in London; and Arden, returning to Feversham, is followed by the ruffians who had been hired: they again endeavour to accomplish their purpose while Arden is journeying in the isle of Sheppy; but are again disappointed, their victim on both occasions being, as it were, providentially saved. At last they are reduced to the necessity of murdering Arden in his own house: Mosbie sits down with him to play at tables, and Black-Will, Shakebag, and Greene rush in from behind, and (in the presence, and with the aid of Alice Arden, Mosbie's sister Susan, and Michael),

¹ Our quotations are from the rare edition of 1599, in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire.

Arden is stabbed. His body is secretly conveyed to a field behind the house, but blood is found upon the floor, and the footsteps of the murderers are traced in the snow, which had unexpectedly fallen. Mrs. Arden and Mosbie confess, and, together with Susan and Michael (who are in love with each other), are carried out to execution. The epilogue informs us that Shakebag was eventually murdered in Southwark, Black-Will burnt at Flushing, and Greene hanged.

The characters are drawn with some force and distinctness. Arden is a kind-hearted husband, and his wife bad only in consequence of her fatal attachment to Mosbie, which leads her, step by step, to the last stage of guilt, but amid constant misgivings and feminine resolutions of virtue. Professor Tieck (who has translated this play into German with much skill and fidelity, and who is more than inclined to think that Shakespeare was the author of it) observes that Mosbie is 'always low and wicked';¹ but when we find the following lines uttered by him in the earlier part of the play, before the murder has been perpetrated, it cannot be denied that even he has something redeeming about him—

'Well fares the man, howe'er his cates do taste,
That tables not with foul suspicion ;
And he but pines amongst his delicacies
Whose troubled mind is stuff'd with discontent.
My golden time was when I had no gold :
Though then I wanted, yet I slept secure.
My daily toil begat my night's repose ;
My night's repose made daylight fresh to me ;
But since I climb'd the top bough of the tree,
And sought to build my nest among the clouds,
Each gentle stirring gale² doth shake my bed,

¹ *Mosbie ist immer gemein und schlecht*—Vorrede to Tieck's *Shakespeare's Vorschule*, p. xxv.

² We have here taken a liberty with the text, where this expression

And makes me dread my downfall to the earth.
But whither doth contemplation carry me?
The way I seek to find, where pleasure dwells,
Is hedg'd behind me, that I cannot back,
But needs must on, although to danger's gate.'

Independent of particular speeches, there is certainly one fine scene between Mosbie and Alice, immediately succeeding what is above quoted, and in the opening of which Alice, with a prayer-book in her hand, struggles hard to return to virtue, but her strength failing, she at last abandons herself to the guidance of her guilty passion. Mosbie asks her, in the commencement, 'What, are you changed?' and she replies with exquisite pathos—

'Aye—to my former happy life again :
From title of an odious strumpet's name
To honest Arden's wife—not Arden's honest wife.
Ah, Mosbie, 'tis thou hast rifled me of that,
And made me slanderous to all my kin !'

Mosbie reproaches her, threatens to leave her for ever, and her fears take instant alarm—

'Nay, hear me speak, Mosbie, a word or two :
I'll bite my tongue if it speak bitterly.
Look on me, Mosbie, or I'll kill myself !
Nothing shall hide me from thy stormy look.
If thou cry war, there is no peace for me :
I will do penance for offending thee,
And burn this prayer-book, where I here use
The holy word that hath converted me.
See, Mosbie, I will tear away the leaves,
And all the leaves ; and in this golden cover
Shall thy sweet phrases and thy letters dwell ;

stands 'Each gentle *stary* gaile', etc. A *stary* gale is nonsense, and perhaps *straying* was the word.

And thereon will I chiefly meditate,
And hold no other sect but such devotion !'

Had Mosbie been drawn merely 'low and wicked', Alice would have been without excuse for her infidelity to Arden, and her blind love for her paramour. After the detection of the murder, and when they are on their way to the place of punishment, Mosbie, with a want of generosity not inconsistent with his character, instead of pitying Alice, abuses her. Alice says—

'Leave now to trouble me with worldly things,
And let me meditate upon my Saviour Christ,
Whose blood must save me for the blood I shed.

Mosbie.—How long shall I live in this hell of grief?
Convey me from the presence of that strumpet.

Alice.—Ah, but for thee I had never been a strumpet !
What cannot oaths and protestations do,
When men have opportunity to woo ?
I was too young to sound thy villanies,
But now I find it, and repent too late.'

Arden of Feversham was first printed in 1592, and it may be said to bring us to the period when Shakespeare was an established writer for the stage ; and there seems every reason for supposing that he employed himself, in the first instance, in reviving, altering and adding to the works of older dramatists. There are six plays, four of which were acted a shorter or a longer time before Shakespeare commenced dramatist, and upon which he is said by Steevens (who published them collectively in 1779) to have 'founded' six of his productions : to these it will be necessary now to advert, in order to show (as far as these 'six old plays' will enable us to do so) the state of the drama just prior to the era of Shakespeare, and to establish the degree in which he really

was indebted to the works of earlier writers. It has been a growing opinion, founded upon progressive discoveries, that our great dramatist touched comparatively few subjects that had not been previously brought upon the public stage, and wisely availed himself of such assistances as they afforded, and he could judiciously adopt.

We ought not to close this division of our subject without a notice of *Mucedorus*, a very old drama existing before the time of Shakespeare, which, however, has been attributed to him on the score of a few lines which, we may imagine, he was called upon to add on some revival of the performance as a Court entertainment. Shakespeare's contribution may be detected in a moment without the aid of a word peculiar to him, 'extolment'; and used nowhere by him but, as an affected expression, in *Hamlet*. The drama of *Mucedorus* is of little worth excepting as a specimen of the productions of our early stage; and since the discovery of the portion Shakespeare supplied, it has been added to the edition of his works.

ON THE
SIX OLD PLAYS

TO WHICH SHAKESPEARE WAS, OR IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE
BEEN, INDEBTED.

THE six old plays on which, as asserted by Steevens, Shakespeare 'founded' his *Measure for Measure*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *King John*, *Henry the Fifth*, and *King Lear*, are the following:—*The History of Promos and Cassandra*, printed in 1578; *The Troublesome Reign of King John*, printed in 1591; *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, acted prior to 1588, probably published in 1594, and certainly printed in 1598; *The Taming of a Shrew*, printed in 1594; *The Chronicle History of Leir, King of England*, probably published in 1594, and certainly printed in 1605; *Menæchmi, taken out of Plautus*, printed in 1595.

When Steevens reprinted these pieces in 1779,¹ he ventured upon no argument nor explanation to prove how, and to what extent Shakespeare was under obligation to their authors: with respect to the last, of which we shall speak first, it may now be taken for granted that he did not make the slightest use of it. *Menæchmi taken out of Plautus*, by W. W. (perhaps W. Warner), did not appear, in all probability, until several years after *The Comedy of Errors* (which has been supposed to be founded upon it) had been brought upon the stage.

¹ In two volumes, 8vo, but the pagination is, most unusually, continued from volume to volume.

Malone assigns *The Comedy of Errors* to 1592, and we may conclude, with tolerable safety, that it had its origin in that or in the following year. Although there is no trace of any similarity between it and the translation of the *Menæchmi* by W. W., of 1595, yet there is little doubt that *The Comedy of Errors* was founded upon some older English play, which was an adaptation of the *Menæchmi* much anterior to 1595. On New-year's night 1576-7, the children of Paul's, acted *The History of Error* at Hampton Court: this fact is recorded by Malone,¹ but he has not remarked also, that it was repeated on Twelfth-night, 1582-3; for although, by mistake, in the account of the Revels at that date, it is called *A History of Ferrar*, the person who made out the list of plays, writing from the sound only, meant doubtless the same piece as the *History of Error*. This play may have been the foundation of Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*, and the circumstance, that he borrowed certain parts from the old *History of Error*, will explain all that the commentators have said regarding doggerel verses, and the apparent authorship of two different persons in the same play. The doggerel fourteen-syllable verses given to the Dromios are precisely such as were used in dramatic performances not long before the period when Shakespeare began to write for the stage; and, as Malone himself has observed, he most likely obtained the designations of Antipholus *erraticus* and Antipholus *surreptus*, which are found in the old copy of the *Comedy of Errors*,¹ from this source. We may, therefore, very safely dismiss from our consideration the translation of *Menæchmi* by W. W., on the grounds that Shakespeare did not use it, and that it was not printed until some time after he had commenced his theatrical career.

It is, we think, equally certain that the other five old plays, above enumerated, were anterior to the date of any of Shake-

¹ *Shakespeare by Boswell*, iv, 151.

speare's productions: four of them were published anonymously, and there is by no means sufficient ground for the supposition, entertained by some of the German critics, that they were the juvenile works of our great dramatist, who subsequently altered and improved them. They bear no resemblance to his style, as exhibited in his undoubted performances; and nothing is more clear than that at the time when he commenced his career, and afterwards, it was the constant custom for dramatic poets to revive, amend, and make additions to, productions which had once been popular, but which required novelty and adaptation to the expectations of the age. Judging from internal and external evidence, we should be inclined to place the five old plays in the following order, with reference to the dates at which they were produced, and according to that arrangement we shall speak of each:—1. *Promos and Cassandra*. 2. *Henry the Fifth*. 3. *King John*. 4. *King Leir*. 5. *Taming of a Shrew*.

Promos and Cassandra was written by a poet of considerable celebrity in his day, George Whetstone, and it came from the press of Richard Jones in 1578: it is divided into a first and second part; and, perhaps, the most remarkable circumstance connected with the performance is one that has not hitherto been noticed, viz.; that the first part is entirely in rhyme, while in the second are inserted considerable portions of blank-verse, put only into the mouth of the King, as if it better suited the royal dignity. This fact might appear to militate against the position, elsewhere maintained in this work, that blank-verse was not employed upon the common, popular stage until 1586 or 1587, did we not know that *Promos and Cassandra* never was performed, either in public or private. Whetstone himself gives us this information, in his *Heptameron of Civil Discourses*, 1582: he there inserts a translation of the original novel on which he constructed his

play,¹ and in a marginal note he observes: 'this Historie, for rarenes therof, is lively set out in a Comedie by the Reporter of the whole worke, *but yet never presented upon stage*'. It is likely that there was some interval between the penning of the first and of the second parts of *Promos and Cassandra*, and that in that interval the author had acquired a taste for blank-verse, and therefore employed it, never designing the piece for popular representation, for which, on this account among others, he might think it unfit. The year 1578 is an early date for the use of blank-verse for dramatic purposes, and a short extract will show sufficiently that Whetstone had not much improved upon the few examples already set. The King first addresses Cassandra (who answers to Shakespeare's Isabella), who has appealed to him, and he afterwards turns to Promos, the wicked deputy:

'Thy forced fault was free from evill intent :
So long, no shame can blot thee any way ;
And though at full I hardly may content thee,
Yet, as I may assure thyselfe, I wyl.—
Thou wycked man, might it not thee suffice,
By worse then force to spoyle her chastitie,
But, heaping sinne on sinne, against thy oth
Hast cruelly her brother done to death ?
This over prooffe ne can but make me thinke
That many waies thou hast my subjectes wrongd ;
For how canst thou with justice use thy swaie,
When thou thy selfe dost make thy will a lawe ?
Thy tyranny made mee this progresse make,
How so for sport tyl nowe I colloured it,
Unto this ende, that I might learne at large
What other wronges by power thou hast wrought.'

¹ Contained in *La Seconda Parte de gli Hecatommithi di M. Giovanbatista Giraldi Cinthio*. See Deca. 8, Nov. 5, p. 415. Edit. 1565.

This quotation shows also one principal variation in the conduct of the story as related by Shakespeare. In *Promos and Cassandra*, the King sends the hero as his Viceroy into Hungary; but hearing of his tyranny and misrule, he makes a 'progress' thither, as if 'for sport', to ascertain the truth: he does not, like the Duke in *Measure for Measure*, withdraw from his Court, and in disguise watch over the administration of justice by his substitute.¹

It has been observed, that Shakespeare in no instance adopted the names of the *dramatis personæ* of Whetstone, but this will not at all establish that he did not use *Promos and Cassandra*; for Whetstone has in like manner varied from Cinthio, whose novel he professes to follow, and where the hero is called Juriste, and the heroine Epitia. It is, however, not improbable that there was another version of the Italian tale current at the time, and possibly in a dramatic form, where Shakespeare might find the name of Vincentio, which is inserted in his *dramatis personæ*, although throughout the play he is only called the Duke. He may have caught Isabella, from Whetstone's *Heptameron*, 1582, because there a lady of that name is made the narrator of the novel in question from Cinthio.

Although the first part of *Promos and Cassandra* is in rhyme, the author has introduced variety into his measure, and he changes at will from ten-syllable to fourteen-syllable lines, making them rhyme sometimes in couplets, and sometimes alternately, two of the lines having no corresponding termination: thus, when Andrugio, the brother, recommends

¹ Shakespeare may very possibly have taken his title *Measure for Measure* from a short moral observation in Act v, scene 4, of the first part of *Promos and Cassandra*:

'who others doth deceyve,
Deserves himself *like measure* to receyve.'

his sister, Cassandra, to comply with the guilty wishes of Promos, as the least of two evils, she replies, with spirit,

‘And of these evils, the least, I hold, is death,
To shun whose dart we can no mean devyse :
Yet honor lives when death hath done his worst.
Thus fame then lyfe is of farre more comprise.’

This, however, is a comparatively rare instance, the regularity of rhyme, either in couplets or alternate, being usually observed. Besides those engaged in the serious part of the representation, Whetstone introduces many characters, parasites, cheats, pandars, bawds, prostitutes, bullies, and rustics, in order to give variety to the performance, the story of which drags heavily through the two parts to which it is extended. A person of the name of Rosko, in *Promos and Cassandra*, fills precisely the same part as the clown in *Measure for Measure*; and he is concerned in a good deal that was meant by Whetstone for Comedy, though that poet has, in very few instances, accomplished anything like his intention. The most tolerable scene of this kind is between Rosko, a rustic called Grimball, and a cutpurse of the name of Rowke. Grimball, wishing to render himself amiable in the eyes of the waiting-maid to a courtesan, is carried by Rowke to Rosko (who pretends to be a barber), that he may be washed and trimmed. While this operation is performed, Rowke contrives to make off with Grimball's purse, and the countryman does not perceive his loss, until Rosko proceeds to pick his teeth. The dialogue of the comic portion of the piece possesses neither wit nor humour, but is more than sufficiently gross.

On the whole, although it seems clear that Shakespeare kept Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra* in his eye, it is probable that he also made use of some other dramatic composition or novel, in which the same story was treated, possibly, as he himself treated it.

In *Measure for Measure* we have seen that Shakespeare compressed Whetstone's two plays into one, but he expanded the single play of *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*¹ over three performances, inserting hints from it in his two parts of Henry IV and in his Henry V. He, however, also resorted to the chroniclers, and especially to Holinshed, for other circumstances of an historical kind, while he seems to have trusted to his own resources for most of the comic characters, scenes, and incidents. *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* opens with a robbery committed by Prince Henry (throughout called Henry V) and some of his wild companions, among whom is Sir John Oldcastle, a fat knight, who also goes by the familiar name of Jockey. The question whether Shakespeare did or did not take the hint of his Falstaff from this corpulent personage, and whether in fact Falstaff was not, in the first instance, called Sir John Oldcastle, is argued at length in Malone's *Shakespeare by Boswell*, xvi, 410,² etc.

¹ Malone (*Shakespeare by Boswell*, iii, 307) inserts, from Henslowe's *Diary*, a notice, under the date of the 26th of May, 1597, of a play called *Harey the 'fifte' Life and Death*, and in a note he adds, 'This could not have been the play already mentioned, because in that Henry does not die; nor could it have been Shakespeare's play.' His difficulty upon this point arose simply from his having mis-read the MS. of Henslowe, where it stands, as all must acknowledge who know anything of the handwriting of the time, not *Harey the 'fifte'* but *Harey the 'firste'*, showing that there was an old historical play upon the life and death of Henry I. The play of *Harey the V* is entered in Henslowe's *Diary* as performed on the 28th of November 1595, being then, no doubt, a revival, with improvements, of the piece now under consideration—*The famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*.

² Dr. Farmer (founding himself on a passage in Nathaniel Field's *Amends for Ladies*, 1618) was the first to broach this notion, and the balance of evidence seems to be decidedly in his favour: supposing the fact to be so, another question has arisen out of it, why Shakespeare subsequently made the change? It has been suggested that he did so to

This point is only important, as it relates to the obligation of Shakespeare for the bare hint of such a delightful creation as Falstaff. If Shakespeare were indebted thus far, he owed little else to the old *Henry the Fifth* that can now be traced, and it certainly has not come down to us in a shape to make it probable that he would avail himself of much that he found in it. Here and there lines more or less remotely resemble; and the strongest likeness that has yet been discovered is where, in *Shakespeare* (Act v, sc. 2), Katherine asks, 'Is it possible dat I should love the enemy of France?' which runs thus in the older play, 'How should I love thee, which is my father's enemy?'

The play of *The famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* was entered on the Stationers' books in 1594, and although no copy of that date has been found, it was probably, as we have already remarked, then printed:¹ the date of its authorship was, however, more remote, and it is unquestionable that it was acted prior to 1588, because Tarleton, who is recorded to have played the two parts of the Judge, who was struck by Prince Henry, and Derrick, the clown, died in that year. We should be inclined to fix it not long after 1580, and it was

avoid confounding the two characters, the Sir John Oldcastle of the old *Henry the Fifth* being 'a mere pampered glutton'. The point, *when he made the change*, does not seem to have been examined; and at all events it is quite evident from Field's comedy that, even after the change was made, Falstaff was still known to the multitude by the name of Oldcastle. *Amends for Ladies* could not have been written before 1611; yet there Falstaff's description of honour is mentioned by a citizen of London as if it had been delivered by Sir John Oldcastle, not by Falstaff.

¹ The play had, perhaps, been revived about 1592 or 1593, as Nash mentions it in his *Pierce Pennilesse*. That revival may have led Shakespeare to take up and improve the same subject; and the success of Shakespeare's play might occasion the printing of the old *Henry the Fifth*, either in opposition to it, or to take advantage of temporary popularity.

perhaps played by the Queen's players who were selected from the companies of several noblemen in 1583, and of whom Tarleton was one. The circumstance that the whole of it is in prose deserves observation: it might be thought in 1583, or soon afterwards, that the jingle of rhyme did not well suit an historical subject on the stage; and we have learnt from Stephen Gosson, that, prior to 1579, prose plays had been acted at the Belsavage: the experiment, therefore, by the author of the old *Henry the Fifth*, was not a new one, although the present may be the earliest extant instance of an heroic story so treated.¹ Nevertheless, by the time it was printed, blank-verse had completely superseded both rhyme and prose: the publisher seems, on this account, to have chopped up much of the original prose into lines of various lengths, in order to look like some kind of measure, and now and then he has contrived to find lines of ten syllables each, that run with tolerable smoothness, and as if they had been written for irregular blank-verse. The following is a short example, the passage commencing with a regular verse terminated by a trochee: it is Prince Henry's speech in excuse for taking away the crown while his father slept—

‘Most soveraigne lord, and welbeloved father,
 I came into your chamber to comfort the melancholy
 Soule of your body, and finding you at that time
 Past all recovery and dead, to my thinking,
 God is my witnesse; and what should I doo
 But with weeping teares lament the death of you, my father;
 And after that seeing the crown, I took it.
 And tell me, father, who might better take it then I,
 After your death? but seeing you live,

¹ Gascoigne's *Supposes*, translated from *Ariosto*, we have seen, was in prose; but that was only a comedy, and it was acted, not at a public theatre, but before the Society of Gray's Inn.

I most humbly render it into your majesties hands,
And the happiest man alive that my father live :
And live, my lord and father, for ever.'

The excuse of the Prince is the same in Shakespeare (*Henry IV*, Part ii, Act iv, scene 4), but it is not necessary to show here how differently it is urged and enforced. Among minor resemblances, which prove that Shakespeare had the old *Henry the Fifth* before him when he wrote his play upon the events of that reign, may be noticed the refusal of the French King to allow his son, the Dauphin, to endanger his person with the English.¹ Little as Shakespeare, in the serious part of his composition, has derived from the older historical play, his obligations are still lighter with reference to the comic portions. After Prince Henry has struck the Chief Justice, and has been liberated from prison, in the old *Henry the Fifth* he has a conversation with Sir John Oldcastle, Ned and Tom, his companions in his robberies at Gads-hill : Sir John Oldcastle, speaking of Henry IV, says, 'He is a good old man : God take him to his mercy'; and the Prince addressing Ned, observes, 'So soon as I am King, the first thing I will do shall be to put my Lord Chief Justice out of office, and thou shalt be my Lord Chief Justice of England.' The reply of Ned resembles, even verbally, that of Falstaff when the Prince of Wales tells him (*Henry IV*, Part i, Act i, scene 2) that when he is King he shall have the hanging of the thieves : Ned says, in the older play—

'Shall I be Lord Chief Justice ?

By Gog's wounds, I'll be the bravest Lord Chief Justice
That ever was in England.'—

The character of Derrick, the clown, runs through the whole piece, and that Tarleton was able to make anything out of such

¹ *Henry V*, Act iii, scene 6, and *Six Old Plays*, ii, 357.

unpromising materials affords strong evidence of the original resources of that extraordinary comedian.

The old *Troublesome Reign of John, King of England*, is in two parts, and bears the marks of more than one hand in its composition : the first part, and especially the earlier portion of it, is full of rhymes, while in the second part they comparatively seldom occur ; which may be adduced to establish that the one was written nearer the date when rhyme was first discarded. The blank-verse of the second part is also a decided improvement upon that of the first part : it is less cumbrous and more varied, though still monotonous in its cadences. Malone, upon conjecture only, attributed the old *King John* to Greene or Peele,¹ and some passages in the second part would do credit to either. In the opening of it is a beautiful simile, which Shakespeare might have used, had he not been furnished, on the same occasion, with another from the abundant store of his own fancy : that which he employs has, perhaps, more novelty, but assuredly less grace, and both are equally appropriate. Arthur has thrown himself from the tower, and is found dead : Shakespeare calls his body

‘ An empty casket, where the jewel of life
By some damn’d hand was robb’d and ta’en away.’

The author of the second part of the old *King John* describes the dead body as a

‘ Withered flower,
Who in his life shin’d like the morning’s blush,
Cast out of door.’

¹ In a note on Act v, scene 7 of *King John*, Malone cites a corresponding passage from *Lust’s Dominion*; and if his reasoning were founded on fact, we might infer that Marlow, as well as Greene and Peele, was concerned in the production of the old *King John*. The truth, however, is that Marlow had nothing to do with the authorship of *Lust’s Dominion*, although it had been invariably assigned to him, until in the

Shakespeare may be said to have borrowed nothing from this piece beyond an unimportant historical blunder, pointed out by Stevens: as to his having 'preserved the greatest part of the conduct' of the elder production, both writers very much followed the chroniclers of the time. Our great dramatist has however displayed, as usual, his superior skill in framing the plot; and, with a single omission, he has brought into the compass of his one play the incidents that are tediously extended through the two parts of the old *King John*. That omission is the plunder of the abbey of Swinstead by Falconbridge, where he finds a nun concealed in the apartment of the Abbot, and a friar in that of the Abbess.

The characters in both performances are nearly the same; but while, in the old play, they are comparatively only instruments of utterance, Shakespeare breathes a spirit of life into his historical personages, and they live again in his lines. Shakespeare may be criticised for a century, but after all we shall only arrive at this point—that we admire him above all others, because he is, more than all others, the poet of actual existence.

The story of *Lear and his Daughters* is full of moral impossibilities, and Shakespeare's play, founded upon it, is the triumph of sympathy over utter improbability. Our feelings are deeply interested from the first scene to the last; yet the events, out of which those scenes arise, could scarcely have occurred in any state of society. The old *Chronicle History of King Leir*, as it is called on the title-page, was most likely published in 1594, when it was entered for that purpose on the Stationers' books;¹

last edition of Dodsley's *Old Plays* it was irrefragably proved that Marlow had been dead five years before some of the historical events in *Lust's Dominion* occurred. *Vide* Dodsley's *Old Plays*, ii, 311, edit. 1825.

¹ It was played by Henslowe's company, as we find by his *Diary*, on the 6th April 1593. The old copy of 1594, or of about that date, having survived, we are enabled to make the comparison.

while it is probable that Shakespeare's tragedy, on the same subject, was not produced until 1605. He seems to have introduced more variance than usual in his conduct of the plot, and especially to have changed the conclusion, which, in the old play, is managed with great simplicity, and with the observance of that poetical justice which Shakespeare has been blamed by some for disregarding. In the *Chronicle History*, Lear is restored to his throne, after the defeat and exile of his two wicked daughters, while Cordella (so she is there named) and her husband, the King of France, after reposing awhile with the old King, return to their own dominions. Shakespeare has given a new interest to his performance, by the episode of Gloucester and his two sons, which contributes to enforce the same moral lesson. The faithful and professed Fool is likewise new to him; and it need not be stated how much that contrast adds to the effect of the awful scenes in which he is introduced. The madness of Lear is not to be traced in the old play; and we may be satisfied, from the language of the old ballad,¹ that it was founded upon Shakespeare's tragedy, and not, as some have supposed, Shakespeare's tragedy upon it. The hint of the part of Kent is undoubtedly taken from the Perillus of the *Chronicle History*; but the latter is a poor, spiritless lamenter over the injuries of Cordella (we give the old spelling of the name) in the earlier scenes, and in the progress of the play, instead of contrasting with Lear, he not only partakes the sufferings, but shares the imbecilities of the old monarch. In the *Chronicle History*, one of the daughters sends a messenger, to murder her father and Perillus in a wood; and the most affecting scene in the piece is that in which the two old men so piteously plead for their lives, that the assassin is unable to perform the duty he had undertaken. In the *Chronicle History*, the two wicked daughters are not married,

¹ See Malone's *Shakespeare by Boswell*, x, 297.

until their husbands have been bribed by the offer of the division of the kingdom, and the union of Cordella with the King of France is thus absurdly conducted:—the King of France, with one of his nobles, visits England as a pilgrim, and meeting Cordella, driven from her father's Court, they fall in love with each other on the spot, he not knowing that she is a Princess, nor she that he is a King. Old Lear puts on the dress of a shipman, when he flies to France from Ragan and Gonorill, and there is accidentally met by Cordella and her royal spouse, who are making a journey to the sea-side in disguise.

Nothing can be more tame and mechanical than the whole of the dialogue of the *Chronicle History*, which Malone, with great injustice, conjectures to have been written by the early and vigorous pen of Thomas Kyd.

The last of the six old plays is that to which Shakespeare was most indebted: all the principal situations, and part of the language of his *Taming of the Shrew* are to be found in 'the pleasant conceited History called the *Taming of a Shrew*', a work of very considerable talent, as evinced by the conduct of the plot, the nature of the characters, and the versification of the dialogue. It was printed in 1594; and we shall give the title of this edition at length, because it was unknown to Malone, Steevens, and the rest of the commentators:¹—'A pleasant conceited Historie called *The Taming of a Shrew*.

¹ Pope seems to have had a copy of the edition of 1594, but afterwards it was lost sight of for about a century, and has only very recently been recovered. It was entered on the Stationers' books on 2nd May 1594, and, no doubt, appeared soon afterwards. Steevens reprinted from a copy dated 1607, having seen no earlier edition. The old copy of 1594 was carefully reprinted in 1844, under the superintendence of that most excellent and learned man Thomas Amyot. The old copy of 1594 cost the late Duke of Devonshire £97.

As it was sundry times acted by the Right honorable the Earle of Pembroke his servants. Printed at London by Peter Short, and are to be sold by Cuthbert Burbie, at his shop at the Royall Exchange, 1594.' Although it is not enumerated by Meres, in 1598, among the plays Shakespeare had then written, and although in Act iv, scene 1, it contains an allusion to Heywood's *Woman killed with Kindness*, which was not produced until after 1603, Malone finally fixed upon 1596 as the date when Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* was produced. His earlier conjecture of 1606 seems much more probable, and his only reason for changing his mind was that the versification resembled 'the old comedies antecedent to the time' of Shakespeare, and in this notion he was certainly well-founded. We are, however, satisfied that more than one hand (perhaps at distant dates) was concerned in it, and that Shakespeare had little to do with any of the scenes in which Katherine and Petruchio are not engaged. The underplot resembles the dramatic style of William Haughton, author of an excellent comedy, called *Englishmen for my Money*, which was produced prior to 1598.

Hurd gives Shakespeare great praise for 'the excellence of the moral design' of the Induction to his *Taming of the Shrew*, not being aware that the credit due on this account belongs to the author of the original comedy of 1594.¹ Shakespeare has, indeed, made very material changes, both of persons and dialogue; but the lesson enforced by the one and by the other is the same. As the copy of the old *Taming of a Shrew* of 1594 is a great curiosity, and as very little

¹ Unless Warton be correct in his statement (*Hist. Engl. Poet.*, iv, 118) that it was derived from a collection of Tales by Richard Edwards (author of *Damon and Pythias*, etc.), printed in 1570, which was among the books of Collins at Chichester. No such collection of Tales is now known to be in existence, and the loss is most deeply to be lamented.

attention has been hitherto paid to the Induction, as it stands in the original of Shakespeare's comedy, we shall quote from it *literatim* at greater length than usual, in order to show, for the first time, the nature and degree of our great dramatist's obligation in this part of the play.

'Enter a Tapster, beating out of his doores Slie droonken.

Tapster.—You whorson droonken slave, you had best be gone,
And empty your droonken panch somewhere else,
For in this house thou shalt not rest to night.

[Exit Tapster.

Slie.—Tilly vally, by crisee, Tapster, Ile fese you anon,
Fil's the tother pot, and alls paid for, looke you.
I doo drinke it of mine owne Instegation : *Omne bene.*
Heere Ile lie a while. Why, Tapster, I say,
Fil's a fresh cushen heere.
Heigh ho, heer's good warme lying. *[He fals asleepe.*

[Enter a Nobleman and his men from hunting.

Lord.—Now that the gloomie shaddow of the night,
Longing to view Orion's drisling lookes,
Leapes from th' antarticke world unto the skie,
And dims the welkin with her pitchie breath,
And darksome night oreshades the christall heavens,
Heer breake we off our hunting for to night.
Cupple uppe the hounds, let us hie us home,
And bid the huntsman see them meated well,
For they have all deserv'd it well to daie.—
But soft, what sleepe fellow is this lies heere ?
Or is he dead, see one what he dooth lacke ?

Servingman.—My Lord, tis nothing but a drunken sleepe.
His head is too heavie for his bodie,
And he hath drunke so much that he can go no furder.

Lord.—Fie, how the slavish villaine stinkes of drinke.—
Ho, sirha, arise ! What ! so sound asleepe ?
Go take him uppe, and beare him to my house,

And beare him easilie for feare he wake.
 And in my fairest chamber make a fire,
 And set a sumptuous banquet on the boord,
 And put my richest garmentes on his backe,
 Then set him at the table in a chaire :
 When that is doone, against he shall awake,
 Let heavenlie musicke play about him still.
 Go two of you awaie, and beare him hence,
 And then Ile tell you what I have devisde ;
 But see in any case you wake him not.

[Exeunt two with Slie.]

Now take my cloake, and gyve me one of yours.
 Al fellowes now, and see you take me so,
 For we will waite upon this droonken man,
 To see his countnance when he dooth awake,
 And finde him selfe clothed in such attire.
 With heavenlie musicke sounding in his eares,
 And such a banquet set before his eies,
 The fellow sure will thinke he is in heaven :
 But we will be about him when he wakes ;
 And see you call him Lord at everie word,
 And offer thou him his horse to ride abroad,
 And thou his hawkes, and houndes to hunt the deere,
 And I will aske what sutes he meanes to weare,
 And what so ere he saith, see you doo not laugh,
 But still perswade him that he is a Lord. *[Enter one.]*

Mes.—And it please your honour, your plaiers be com,
 And doo attend your honour's pleasure here.

Lord.—The fittest time they could have chosen out.
 Bid one or two of them come hither straight ;
 Now will I fit my selfe accordinglie,
 For they shall play to him when he awakes.

[Enter two of the players with packs at their backs, and a boy.]

Now, sirs, what store of plaies have you ?

San.[der]—Marrie, my lord, you maie have a Tragicall,
 Or a comoditie, or what you will.

The other.—A Comedie thou shouldst say : souns ! thout shame
us all.

Lord.—And what's the name of your Comedie ?

San.—Marrie, my lord, 'tis calde *The Taming of a Shrew*.

'Tis a good lesson for us, my lord, for us y^t are married
men.

Lord.—*The Taming of a Shrew*, that's excellent sure.

Go see that you make you readie straight,

For you must play before a lord to-night.

Say you are his men, and I your fellow :

Hee's something foolish, but what so ere he saies,

See that you be not dasht out of countenance.'

The reprint made by Steevens, in 1779, from the edition of the old *Taming of a Shrew* (mentioned by Sir J. Harrington in 1596),¹ will enable the reader to judge how far Shakespeare, and, as we suppose, his coadjutor, were aided by the previous drama ; and as the resemblance runs through the whole performance, it is not necessary to point out particular instances. Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* is deficient in the conclusion, for we there hear nothing of Sly after the play is ended : in the old piece of 1594, he is again borne to the door of the ale-house, and there left asleep : it is related in the following manner.

'[*Then enter two bearing of Slie in his owne apparell, and leaves him where they found him, and then goes out : then enter the Tapster.*

Tapster.—Now that the darkesome night is overpast,

And dawning day appeares in cristall skie,

Now must I haste abroad : but soft ! who's this ?

What, Slie ! O wondrous ! hath he laine heere all night ?

I'le wake him : I thinke hee's starved by this,

But that his belly was so stufft with ale.

¹ In his *Metamorphosis of Ajax* printed in that year.

What now? Slie, awake, for shame!

Slie.—Sim, givs some more wine :—whats all the
Players gone? am not I a Lord?

Tapster.—A Lord, with a murrin : come, art thou drunken still?

Slie.—Who's this? Tapster, O Lord, sirha! I have had the bravest
dreame to-night, that ever thou hardest in all thy life.

Tapster.—I, mary; but you had best get you home,
For your wife will course you for dreaming heere to-night.

Slie.—Wil she? I know now how to tame a shrew;
I dreamt upon it all this night till now,
And thou hast wakt me out of the best dreame
That ever I had in all my life : but I'll to my
Wife presently, and tame her too, and if she anger me.

Tapster.—Nay, tarry, Slie; for Ile go home with thee,
And heare the rest that thou hast dreamt to-night.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

The variations between the copies of 1594 and 1607 are not material, the latter being, in fact, a reprint from the former; unless, as Reed asserts, there was an intermediate edition in 1596.¹ One circumstance has not been remarked by the commentators, viz., that the scene of the old *Taming of a Shrew* is laid in Athens, and that the names of the characters are a mixture of Greek, Latin, Italian, English, and Scotch: Shakespeare transferred it to Padua, and altered the *dramatis personæ*, observing, in this particular and in some others, more dramatic propriety than usual.

¹ Malone's *Shakespeare by Boswell*, ii, 341.

THE IMMEDIATE
PRECURSORS OF SHAKESPEARE.

INTRODUCTION.

ANTERIOR to the year 1593, when it has been assumed that Shakespeare began to attract special notice as a dramatic poet, we have seen that the following five theatres were certainly open :—the Blackfriars, the Whitefriars, the Rose on the Bank-side, a playhouse at Newington Butts, and at Paris Garden, where plays were occasionally performed. Besides these, it is probable that the Hope was also in use at this period ; and the school-room at St. Paul's had been early applied to the purpose of acting plays : the employment of inn-yards also, as temporary places of exhibition, had not been discontinued. It is not possible, perhaps, to arrive at anything like a correct notion with regard to the number of companies at any one time playing in London and its vicinity : the writer of a letter to Secretary Walsingham, quoted under the date of 1586 in the *Annals of the Stage* (vol. i, p. 297), mentions the players of the Queen, of Lord Leicester, of Lord Oxford, Lord Nottingham, 'and divers others', then performing ; and in the whole he states that there were not less than two hundred players in and near the metropolis. Allowing for puritanical exaggeration on the part of the writer, and supposing the number to be only about one hundred, each company at that date could scarcely exceed ten or twelve

actors, and this calculation would give about ten companies performing in London and its vicinity in or before 1590.

Philip Henslowe's manuscript *Diary* commences about three years afterwards, a year or two before Shakespeare became an author of 'mark and likelihood'. Henslowe's business, judging from his own accounts, seems originally to have been that of a sort of pawnbroker, who advanced money upon various kinds of property, but especially upon wearing apparel. The players often pledged their dresses with him, and afterwards hired them when they were wanted: this probably was the commencement of Henslowe's connection with plays and theatres. Various companies in this manner might become his debtors; and he ultimately possessed a large share of the wardrobes and properties of the playhouses with which he was concerned. In 1591, he either extensively repaired or built the Rose theatre on the Bankside: and on the 19th of February, in that year, he began to register his proportion of the receipts: the house was then in the occupation of Lord Strange's players. On the 27th of December 1593, he was connected in the same way with Lord Sussex's players, who, in April following, joined the Queen's players; but the union appears to have been of short duration, and after April 1593, Henslowe's concern with Lord Strange's, Lord Sussex's, and the Queen's players seems to have ceased entirely. His interest in the receipts by the Earl of Nottingham's (Lord Admiral) players must have commenced in May 1594; and we do not find that he was engaged at all permanently with any other association of actors until James I had been for some time on the throne. In his *Diary*, or account-book (still preserved in Dulwich College), he has merely written the name of the play, and the amount of the 'takings' at the doors he was entitled to receive, from February 1591, to December 1597; and we can only ascertain the poets who

contributed their productions in that interval, by such of their works as have been printed and have come down to us, or regarding which there exists any extraneous intelligence.

It is probable that prior to the year 1592, or 1593, the copy-right in plays was little understood and less recognised; and that various companies were performing the same dramas at the same time, although perhaps they had been bought by one company for its sole use. The only security against invasions of the kind seems to have been the non-publication of plays, which will account for the few that have reached us, compared with the vast number known to have been written: it will account also for the imperfect state of many of them, especially of those of the earliest dates. A popular play, written for one company, and perhaps acted by that company as it was written, might be surreptitiously obtained by another, having been, at best, taken down from the mouths of the original performers: from the second company it might be procured by a third, and after a succession of changes, corruptions, and omissions, it might find its way at last to the press. We may take it for granted, therefore, that such favourite authors as Robert Greene, Christopher Marlow, Thomas Lodge, George Peele, Thomas Kyd, and some few others, furnished dramatic entertainments not for one company only, but for most of the associations of actors in the metropolis prior to 1592 or 1593; and when we find early in Henslow's *Diary* an entry of *Tamburlaine*, played by Lord Strange's actors, we may conclude that it was exhibited also by the Queen's, Lord Nottingham's, Lord Oxford's, or any other company that could contrive to get up something like the original performance. The extremely popular play by Christopher Marlow, just named, is an instance exactly in point. On the title-page of the printed copy of 1590, we are

told that 'it was played by the servants of the Lord Admiral', yet Henslowe five times mentions its performance by the servants of Lord Strange prior to April 1592.

At a subsequent date, the case seems to have been somewhat different; and after December 1597, when Henslowe began to insert the names of authors, as well as the titles of plays, we find few notices of pieces which appear distinctly to have been employed by other companies than that acting under the name of the Lord Admiral. This circumstance enables us to judge, in some degree, how many plays were written for and produced by a single company from 1597 to 1603. As we know that, besides the Lord Chamberlain's servants, of whom Shakespeare was one, there were various other bodies of performers, who, perhaps, brought out plays with equal rapidity, a notion may be formed of the vast number of dramatic productions that were written, and have been lost. It is capable of proof, that some of the more popular poets in the pay of Henslowe, and whose names are frequently registered by him in his *Diary*, were also engaged by other companies to write plays for them. Regarding those other companies we have no information beyond that which is furnished by a comparatively few printed productions; and if the chief manager of the Globe and Blackfriars theatres kept an account book at all similar to that of Henslowe, it will be apparent, from the *Diary* of the latter, of what a source of information we are deprived by its loss. Henslowe's MS. is by far the most curious existing record connected with our old stage and its performances.

It was in the hands of Malone for several years, and he made numerous quotations from it, which are printed as 'Additions' to his *History of the Stage*. It is fortunate that he has put them in a permanent shape, for not a few are now missing in the original: it is obvious that in its passage from

hand to hand, even while in Malone's charge, it underwent melancholy mutilations; and the autographs of many of the old dramatic poets and actors with whom Henslowe was connected, and other interesting parts of the volume, have been cut away.¹ The Master and Wardens of Dulwich College are now, we are happy to say, fully sensible of the worth of this authentic relic, and it is not likely to be deprived hereafter of such information as it yet contains.

We have several times carefully gone over the whole of the remnant of this singular record, and we are thus enabled to state, that in the quotations Malone furnished from it, he committed various errors and omissions, some of which have

¹ The MS. itself affords abundant evidence of this nefarious conduct, by whomever it may have been committed. Not very long since a volume of old plays was sold, in the centre of which, and used as an index to keep a place, was found what no doubt once formed part of Henslowe's *Diary*. It is an original entry by Edward Alleyn, the husband of the step-daughter of Henslowe, of the engagement of a performer (probably an inferior hireling who never reached eminence, as we hear of him nowhere else) of the name of William Kendall, at ten shillings a-week in London and five shillings a-week in the country. It ran precisely as follows:—

'Md yt this 8th of December, 1597, my father, philyp hinshlow, hiered as A Covenant servant willyam Kendall for ij years, after The statute of winchester, with ij single penc A[nd] to geve hym for his sayd servis everi week of his playing in london xs. and in ye cuntrie vs.: for the wch he covenants for the space of those ij years To be redye att all Tymes to play in the howse of the sayd philyp, and in no other, during the sayd Terme.

Witness my self for witness
of Edw Alleyn

been pointed out in preceding parts of this work. It is not our intention to insert here the information thus supplied relative to our old drama and dramatists, as such a course would occasion useless repetition of much that has already been noticed; but we take this opportunity of correcting some prominent mistakes, and of adding points that escaped Malone's observation. We shall advert to them with reference to the different authors to which the entries in Henslowe's *Diary* apply.

Henry Chettle was concerned in writing *The Famous Wars of Henry the First and the Prince of Wales*, as well as Michael Drayton and Thomas Dekker, to whom Malone assigns it. This fact appears by an entry of money received by Chettle, on account of his joint authorship, which is subscribed -

Henry Chettle

The ascertained date is March 1598; and by a different item it appears, that when the play was read before the company, 'at the Sun in New Fish Street', Henslowe lent them five shillings to be spent in refreshments. It was not an unusual practice to treat the actors on such occasions, and in one instance Henslowe put down no less than thirty shillings towards a reckoning. *The Famous Wars of Henry the First* was doubtless a different play to *Henry the firste, Life and Death*, entered as performed on the 26th of May 1597, which Malone misread as *Harry the fifthe*, and, as has been before remarked, was puzzled by his own misreading.¹ Malone omitted all notice of Chettle's *Woman's Tragedy*, under date of June 1598, and for which five shillings were paid to a

¹ Malone's *Shakespeare by Boswell*, iii, 307.

painter 'for a picture', perhaps some portrait introduced into it. *Troy's Revenge*, by Chettle, Malone calls *Æneas' Revenge*, and couples it with *The Tragedy of Polypheme*, with which it had no connection. The payment of twenty shillings to Chettle for *Polefemos* is separately entered. He also joined with Henry Porter, in an historical play, called *The Spencers*, in March 1598; but Malone deprives Chettle of his share in it. When Malone tells us that 'the second part of *Thomas Strowde*' was most likely the second part of *The Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green*, by John Day and Chettle, he is probably wrong, as there is a distinct entry by Henslowe of 'the second part of *The Blind Beggar*'. Chettle was concerned, in August 1601, in 'mending the play of *Friar Rush, or the Proud Woman of Antwerp*, and received ten shillings for his improvements. The *Jane Shore*, assigned to Chettle and Day in January 1601-2, was only a revival of an older play, as Henslowe then gave forty shillings to those poets, in order that 'the booke of Shoare' might be 'now newly written for the Earl of Worcester's players'. It appears by an entry of 3*l.*, to buy 'a coat and other things' for Will Sommers, that Thomas Downton, or Dowton, was the actor of the character of that fool in 'the second part of *Cardinal Wolsey*', by Chettle. In September 1602, Chettle was engaged upon a play called *Mortimer*, which Malone does not mention.

Chettle was not the sole author concerned in the historical play of *Cardinal Wolsey*, under date of 12th August 1601, although Malone gives it to him alone: he had three coadjutors, viz., Anthony Munday, Michael Drayton, and Wentworth Smith. At this time Munday must have been a poet of considerable experience, and in 1598 he had been called by Francis Meres, much to the offence of Ben Jonson, the 'best plotter': he perhaps was skilful in sketching out the course and progress of the scenes, which were afterwards undertaken

by different dramatists. That he was concerned in *Cardinal Wolsey*, possibly a play in rivalry of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, we have under his own hand, as he thus signs a receipt for money on account of it:

Antony Munday

A whole drama in Munday's MS. has been printed by the Shakespeare Society, and Malone, without hesitation, gives to him the play called by Henslowe *The Widow's Charm*, which he supposed to be *The Puritan, or the Widow of Watling Street*, under a different title: the only entry regarding it runs thus, which, in fact, merely ascertains the Christian name of the writer:—'Unto Antony, the poyete [poet] in earnest of a comody called the *Widowes Charme*, 10s.' Antony Wadeson was also a writer for Henslowe's company, and he may have been the person here intended.

In a former part of this work, on the authority of Thomas Lodge in his *Defence of Plays* (if we may so call his title-less production in vindication of dramatic amusements), it has been stated that Robert Wilson, as early as 1580, was author of a dramatic performance on the subject of the life of Catiline. A history, named by Henslowe *Catalin's Conspiracie*, is entered by him with the date of August 1598, and it is there attributed to Wilson and Chettle. The probability is, that at this time, Wilson (who must have been much senior to his coadjutor) and Chettle had employed themselves in reviving a play, then many years laid aside.

The earliest item in Henslowe's *Diary* which contains the distinguished name of Michael Drayton, is dated December

1597, in connection with a piece called *Mother Redcap*, upon which he and Anthony Munday were employed. The following is an exact copy of another item, entirely in the hand-writing of Drayton, relating to 'the play of William Longsword'.

'I received forty shillings of Mr. Phillip Hinslowe in part of 3*l*. for the playe of *Willm. Longsword*, to be deliv'd p'sent wth[in] 2 or three dayes : the xxth of feveryary 1598.



According to Malone, the earliest notice by Hinslowe of this lost production is dated six months afterwards.

In our *Annals of the Stage*, under the date of 1597 (vol. i, p. 295), are quoted several novel particulars regarding Thomas Nash's comedy of the *Isle of Dogs*, in consequence of which he was thrown into prison, and Hinslowe's company restrained from performing not only that, but any other play. In January 1597, the *Diary* contains a notice of a production with the title of *Dido and Æneas*, without any information as to its author or authors. It was most likely a revival, under the superintendence of Nash, and with his alterations, of the tragedy of *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, which he wrote in conjunction with Marlow anterior to 1593, and which was published in 1594. Hinslowe's *Diary* supplies the very day of its performance when represented by his company:—'Lent unto the company when they fyrst playde *Dido*, at nyght, the some of 30*s*., which wasse the 8 of Jenewary 1597.'—The meaning is, not that *Dido* was played at night, but that 'at night', after

its performance on its revival in 1597, he lent the company 30s., which very likely was spent on a supper at a tavern. On the 3rd January we find the following entry regarding preparations for the performance:—‘Layd owt for copper lace for the littel boye, and for a vale for the boye, ageanste the play of *Dido and Eneis*.’ George Chapman was the author of a piece which Henslowe terms *A Pastoral Tragedy*, under the date of July 1599, and of which Malone takes no notice. Two other novel facts of some importance regarding this capital old poet are also to be gathered from the old Manager’s accounts; viz., that his comedy of *All Fools* (printed in 1605), was written prior to July 1599, and that either one or both of his plays of *Byron’s Conspiracy* and *Byron’s Tragedy* (first published in 1608) were in being in 1602. The first is mentioned in an entry of much particularity, which runs thus. ‘Lent unto Thomas Dowton [or Downton], the 2 of July 1599, to paye Mr. Chapman in full payment for his booke called *The World Ronnes on Wheelles*, and not *All Fooles*, but *The Foole*, 30s.’ *The Fool* is a piece not hitherto included in any list of Chapman’s dramatic works: and *All Fools* would not have been mentioned as distinguished from it, if it had not then been known: Chapman must have made some additions, in 1599, to his *World runs on Wheels*, for it appears that it was first acted a year and a half before, viz., in January 1597. *Byron’s Conspiracy*, or *Tragedy*, is designated by Henslowe as *Byron*, and sometimes as *Burone* and *Birowme*. Chapman signed his receipts of money in the following manner.

Geo: Chapman

We own several autograph dedications by him, some very elaborate.

No particulars of Henry Porter are known beyond those which Henslowe furnishes: he was probably not an actor, as his name does not occur in any list of performers; and among other pieces, he wrote two parts of *The two Angry Women of Abingdon*, for although Henslowe only speaks of the second part, what appears to have been the first part was twice printed in 1599, both editions (for they are distinct impressions) being in the British Museum. He followed them, in February 1598, by *The two Merry Women of Abingdon*, which was perhaps designed by the author as a third part of the same subject; and having made them 'angry' in the two first parts, he may have reconciled them in the last. Malone misdates, as of 1590, an engagement by Porter to let Henslowe have all his productions: the correct date is February 8th, 1599. In April 1599, Porter forfeited to Henslowe a bond in 10*l.* penalty, that he would repay 25*s.* on a certain day which he owed him. Porter was, therefore, in all probability as poor as most of the fraternity of playwrights: those who were also actors seem to have fared somewhat better.

Thomas Dekker, in partnership with William Haughton and John Day, was author of *The Spanish Moor's Tragedy*, which Malone, by a strange error, calls *The Spanish Morris*, but he gives the right date, January 1599-1600. The mistake was more important than it may appear at first sight, because *The Spanish Moor's Tragedy* was most likely the production called *Lust's Dominion*, not printed until 1657, and then falsely attributed to Marlow. A Spanish Moor is the hero of it; and the date in Henslowe, of January 1599-1600, corresponds with that of a tract upon which some of the scenes are even verbally founded.¹ That Marlow, who was killed in 1593, could not, therefore, be the author of it, of course requires no farther proof.

¹ See *Dodsley's Old Plays*, ii, 311, edit. 1825.

The following are fac-similes of the signatures of Dekker and of his two dramatic coadjutors :—

Thomas Dekker.

W. Haughton.

John Day

Malone gives to Henry Chettle a scriptural play on the subject of *Jephtha*; but it is very clear, from Henslowe's book, that it was partly written by Dekker, who received 5*l.* for it. Dekker was likewise the author of *The First Introduction of the Civil Wars in France*, which seems to have been intended to precede three other plays, in which he was assisted by Drayton, relative to the French civil wars. Malone notices the three last, but not an introductory piece by Dekker, in which, according to Henslowe, he had no coadjutor.

We may conclude, with tolerable safety, that Dekker's *Medicine for a Curst Wife*, with the date of August 1602, was a revival of the old *Taming of a Shrew*, which had belonged to Lord Pembroke's players, and to which Shakespeare had been largely indebted. It never seems to have struck Malone, that the endeavour to ascertain the period when some of Shakespeare's plays were brought out might be aided by the

dates when other poets produced revivals of the old subjects to which our great dramatist had resorted. This and other circumstances tend to show that Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* was acted about 1602. In the years 1593 and 1594 Henslowe was in connection with the Lord Chamberlain's players, of whom Shakespeare was one, but his name does not occur from the beginning to the end of the *Diary*. One observation, however, founded upon it ought to be made with reference to the productions of our great dramatist,—that Henslowe enters, within the years 1593 and 1594, at least six of the old plays of which Shakespeare is supposed, more or less, to have availed himself—viz., *Titus Andronicus*, *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Taming of a Shrew*, *Cæsar*, and *Henry the Fifth*. If Shakespeare were a writer of considerable celebrity even in 1594, it is singular that we should find no trace of him in Henslowe's papers. It may support the inference that he did not obtain great distinction until after the Lord Chamberlain's players separated from those acting under the name of the Earl of Nottingham, Lord Admiral. We may take this opportunity of inserting a fac-simile of the signature of Wentworth Smith, whose initials correspond with those of Shakespeare, and who is supposed to have been the real author of more than one piece by W. S., and falsely attributed to our great dramatist.

W. S. mylh.

Smith's name first occurs in Henslowe's *Diary* as an author in December 1599, when, in partnership with John Day, he wrote '*The Italian Tragedy of —*', so entered by the old manager, because he did not know the rest of the title, and which Malone calls merely *The Italian Tragedy*. He had also a hand in *The Six Yeomen of the West*, his coadjutors being William Haughton,

John Day, and Richard Hathwaye, the last an important name, when we recollect that Shakespeare married Ann Hathwaye, although we are not aware that any attempt has been made, or could be made with success, to connect Richard and Ann Hathwaye by ties of relationship. Malone deprived Hathwaye of his share in *The Six Yeomen of the West*, which seems elsewhere called by Henslowe *The Six Clothiers of the West*: Malone erroneously represents them as distinct performances. Hathwaye signs entries in Henslowe's *Diary*, in which he is concerned, in the following manner:—

Ri Hathwaye

It appears, by various parochial memoranda, that Hathwaye was a schoolmaster, and that he resided in the district in which the Fortune theatre was situated: the coincidence of name is remarkable, and he may, possibly, have been Ann's brother.

The Six Yeomen of the West was doubtless founded upon T. Deloney's tract entitled *Thomas of Reading, or the six worthy Yeomen of the West*.¹ We believe no earlier edition is

¹ About forty years ago was recovered a curious little volume by Thomas Deloney, consisting of a collection of ballads and poems under the title of '*Strange Histories; or Songes and Sonets of Kings, Princes, Dukes, Ladyes, Knights, and Gentlemen*. Very pleasant either to be read or songe, and a most excellent warning for all estates. Imprinted at London for W. Barley, etc., 1607, 12mo.' Ritson notices an edition in 1612, which he had not seen, and which was the only copy then known. It may be worth while to add a list of the ballads it contains, with their tunes, some of which are remarkable, especially that of 'Come live with me and be my love', which shows how common that poem, imputed to Shakespeare or Marlow, was at the time. 1. 'The Kentish-men with long-tails', to the tune of 'Roger'; 2. Salomon's 'Good Housewife', to no tune; 3. 'The Drowning of the Children of Henry the First', to the tune of 'The Lady's Daughter'; 4. 'The Dutchess of Suffolk's Calamity', to the tune of 'Queen

now known of it than that of 1612, although it is mentioned by William Kemp, the actor in his *Nine Days' Wonder*, 1600, where he gives an account of the Morris he danced from London to Norwich.

In the dedication to his *Devil's Law Case*, John Webster claims to have been the author of a play, which he calls *The Guise*,¹ not now known, but plausibly supposed to have related

Dido'; 5. Henry II crowning his son King, to the tune of 'Wigmore's Galliard'; 6. The imprisonment of Queen Elinor, to the tune of 'Come live with me and be my love'; 7. The Death of King John, to the tune of 'Fortune'; 8. The imprisonment of Edward II, to the tune of 'Who list to lead a Soldier's life'; 9. The murdering of Edward II, to the tune of 'How can the tree' [possibly this tune is the song in *Sir Clyomon and Clamydes*, before quoted]; 10. The banishment of Lord Matraviers and Sir Thomas Gurney, to the tune of 'Light of love'; 11. The winning of the Isle of Man, to the tune of 'The King's going to the Par[liament]'; 12. The Rebellion of Wat Tyler, to the tune of 'The Miller would a wooing ride'; 13. Fair Rosamond, to the tune of 'Flying fame'. It seems originally to have been intended that the volume should end with 'a speech between certaine Ladyes, being shepheards on Salisburie plaine', but some minor poems, with the initials T. R. and A. C., are added, besides others, that have no signatures: among the latter is 'a new Dittie in Prayse of Money, to a new tune called the King's Jigge', followed by some epigrams. The whole is closed by sentences 'set upon conduits in London against the day that King James came through the Citie at his first comming to the Crowne'. The following are among them:—

'Life is a drop, a sparke, a span,
A bubble: yet how proude is man!'

'Life is a debt, which at that day,
The poorest hath enough to pay.'

'This world's a stage, whereon to-day,
Kings and meane men parts do play;
To-morrow others take their roomes,
While they do fill up graves and toomes.'

This interesting little volume was reprinted by the Percy Society in 1841.

¹ See *Webster's Works*, by the Rev. A. Dyce, I, xiv.

to the slaughter of St. Bartholomew, on which Marlow, nearly ten years before, had written his tragedy with the title of the *Massacre at Paris*. In Henslowe's *Diary* is the following item, 'Lent unto W^m. Jube the 3 Nov. 1601, to bye stamell cloath for a cloek, for the Gwise, 3*l*.' and the name of Webster was interlined in different ink. It however sufficiently connects Webster with the performance, which we may conjecture was a new version of Marlow's tragedy, as in another place Webster's *Guise* is actually called *The Masaker of France*, a title which no doubt it also bore. The name of Thomas Middleton occurs late in Henslowe's *Diary*: Malone, under date of October 1602, mentions *Randall Earl of Chester* by Middleton, which without much probability he supposes to be *The Mayor of Quinborough* under a different title. Middleton also wrote a piece, which Henslowe terms *The Chester Tragedy*, not introduced by Malone into his list; and if that be the same production as *Randall Earl of Chester*, it is still less likely that the comedy of *The Mayor of Quinborough* should have been intended.

From the miscellaneous matter in this very remarkable record, we shall only here subjoin an exact copy of an entry of the marriage of Edward Alleyn, the celebrated actor and founder of Dulwich College, with Joan Woodward in October 1592, which has been often referred to, but never quoted correctly.

'Edward Alen wasse maryed unto Jone Woodward the 22 day of octobr 1592 In the iiij and thirtie yeare of the Quene's Ma'ties Rayne elizabeth by the grace of god of Ingland france and Iarland defender of the fayth'—

This is in the hand of Henslowe, step-father to Alleyn's¹

¹ *Cutlack* is the name which Henslowe gives to a play in which Alleyn (as in many other parts) seems to have gained considerable reputation. In that rare collection of Epigrams and Satires, printed in 16mo, in 1598,

wife. Henslowe seems to have been no great proficient either in writing or reading, and he often makes sad work of the titles of the plays he mentions in his *Diary*. Chalmers states called *Skialetheia, or a Shadowe of Truth*, we find the following lines, which serve to show the nature of the character of Cutlack: the Epigram is headed 'Of Clodius'.

'Clodius, me thinks, lookes passing big of late,
With Dunston's browes and Allen's Cutlack's gait.
What humours have possest him so, I wonder?
His eyes are lightning, and his words are thunder,' etc.

The same collection makes mention of an actor of the name of Gue, who must have been distinguished in the parts of clowns. We cannot refrain from lengthening this note by the following notices, by the anonymous author of *Skialetheia*, of the poets of his day and earlier, as we are not aware that they have ever been quoted. They are from the Sixth Satire.

——— 'For in these our times
Some of opinion's gulls carp at the rimes
Of reverend *Chawcer*: other some do praise them,
And unto heav'n with wonder's wings do raise them.
Some say the mark is out of *Gower's* mouth,
Others, he's better then a trick of youth.
Some blame deep *Spencer* for his grandam words,
Others protest that in them he records
His maister-peece of cunning, giving praise
And gravity to his profound-prickt layes.
Daniel (as some hold) might mount if he list,
But others say that he's a Lucanist.
Markham is censur'd for his want of plot,
Yet others thinke that no deepe stayning blot:
As *Homer* writ his Frogs'-fray learnedly,
And Virgil his Gnats' unkind Tragedy,
So though his plot be poore, his subject's rich,
And his Muse soares a falcon's gallant pitch.
Drayton's condemn'd of some for imitation,
But others say 'twas the best poet's fashion,
In spight of sicke opinion's crooked doome,
Traytor to kingdome mind, true judgment's toomb,

that Alleyn's wife was 'the daughter of Henslowe',¹ but she was in fact the daughter of his wife, who had previously been married to a person of the name of Woodward. Henslowe, nevertheless, constantly terms Alleyn his son, and seems to have left the control of theatrical matters very much to him as, in every sense, the *acting* manager. Alleyn also now and then negotiated with poets for their plays, and it is not at all clear that he was not himself an author: in August 1602, he received £4 from Henslowe for 'two books', called *Philip of Spain* and *Longshanks*, which perhaps were revivals with large additions; the last, of Peele's play of *Edward I*, called *Longshanks* by Henslowe on its first appearance. In October of the same year, we find a notice of a third production by Alleyn, called *Tamberzan*, perhaps a revival of Marlow's famous *Tamburlaine*: Henslowe's entry runs thus, Paid

Like to a worthy *Romaine*, he hath wonne
A three-fold name affined to the Sunne,
When he is mounted in the glorious South,
And Drayton's justly sirnam'd *Golden-mouth*.

The double-volum'd *Satyre* prayes is,
And lik'd of divers for his rods in pisse;
Yet other-some, who would his credite crack,
Have clap'd *Reactioe's* action on his back.

Nay, even wit's Cæsar, Sidney, for whose death
The fates themselves lamented England's scath,
And Muses wept, till of their teares did spring
Admiredly a second *Castal* spring,
Is not exempt for prophanation,
But censured for affectation.'

Drayton was called 'golden-mouthed' by C. Fitzgeffrey, in his poem *On the Death of Sir F. Drake*, 1596. The 'double-volumed Satire' was Marston, who entitled one of his satires '*Re-actio*'. The entry by Henslowe, regarding 'the new poet, Mr. Marstone', has been inserted in the *Annals of the Stage*, vol. i, p. 322.

¹ Malone's *Shakespeare by Boswell*, iii, 504.

unto my sonne E. Alleyn, at the apoyntment of the company, for his booke of Tamberzan, the 29th Oct. 1602, 40s.¹ These circumstances are omitted by Malone.

From the whole of the minute and authentic, though confused, details furnished by Henslowe, it appears that between Feb. 19th, 1591, and July 14th, 1597, upwards of one hundred and ten different plays were performed by the company, or companies, with which he was in that interval connected: viz., Lord Strange's, the Lord Admiral's, the Lord Chamberlain's, and Lord Pembroke's players. In the period between October 1597, and March 1603, the titles of no fewer than one hundred and sixty pieces were inserted by him, either as original compositions, or as revivals of older plays. Independently of individual testimony (like that of Thomas Heywood, an actor and an author under Henslowe in 1597, who claimed, at a subsequent date², to have been concerned, more or less importantly, in no less than two hundred and twenty plays), we have here the most remarkable and unquestionable proof of the prolific talents of our old Elizabethan dramatists. No less than thirty different authors were in Henslowe's pay subsequent to 1597, and not a few of them, as has been already remarked, wrote for other companies besides those in which he was interested. Their names were:—

Anthony Munday.	John Day.	Edward Juby.
Henry Chettle.	John Singer.	Will. Boyle.
Michael Drayton.	Thomas Middleton.	— Pett.

¹ There was also what we suppose to have been an *extempore* play, called *Tamar Cam*, the 'platform' of which was formerly preserved in Dulwich College; a copy of it is inserted in Malone's *Shakespeare by Boswell*, iii, 356. This, however, could scarcely be 'the book of Tamberzan', bought by Henslowe of Alleyn, though at that date the word 'book' had a very extended application.

² In the Address before his *English Traveller*, printed in 1633.

George Chapman.	—— Robinson.	—— Hawkins.
Thomas Dekker.	Ben Jonson.	Antony Wadeson.
Will. Haughton.	Thomas Downton.	Wentworth Smith.
Robert Wilson.	Will. Rankins.	Charles Massey.
Rich. Hathwaye.	Tho. Heywood.	John Webster.
Martin Slaughter.	Saml. Rowley.	Robert Shawe.
Henry Porter.	Will. Bird.	

Of these poets, and poet-players (for many of them were actors as well as authors), only two, Munday and Chettle, can be decisively stated to have been predecessors of Shakespeare; but the plays of such as had written for Henslowe, before what may be called the era of our great dramatist, are registered by him without the names of their authors. We shall now proceed to give some account of the extant works of those who, it can be distinctly ascertained, were the precursors of Shakespeare. Two of the most distinguished dramatists, Marlow and Greene, were dead anterior to the date when Shakespeare had acquired reputation as an original poet.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOW,

AND THE FIRST EMPLOYMENT OF BLANK-VERSE UPON THE
PUBLIC STAGE.

IN the examination of dramatic productions which preceded any of Shakespeare's original works, we have somewhat anticipated an important event in the history of our dramatic poetry—the first employment of blank-verse in performances represented on the public stage. We have seen that in *Love and Fortune*, *Arden of Feversham*, *A Knack to know a Knave*, *The Troublesome Reign of King John*, *The History of King Leir*, *The Taming of a Shrew*, and some other plays, all written prior to 1592, and all acted at theatres frequented by popular audiences, blank-verse, or blank-verse intermixed with rhyme, was employed. It will now be necessary to revert back a few years, in order to ascertain the date at which this change took place (to the speedy and almost entire exclusion of rhyme and prose, which had been previously used), and by whom it was effected.

Verses of ten syllables without rhyme were first composed in English by Lord Surrey, in his translation of parts of the *Æneid*, on the title-page of which it is termed a 'strange metre.' The earliest known instance of its application to the purposes of the drama, was, as far as we know, in the tragedy of *Ferrex and Porrex*, by Sackville and Norton, acted before Queen Elizabeth in 1561-2. The example was followed in 1566 in Gascoyne's *Jocasta*, played at Gray's Inn; and at a

still greater interval by Thomas Hughes, in his *Misfortunes of Arthur*, represented before the Queen at Greenwich in 1587. These, it will be remarked, were plays either performed at Court, or before private societies. The question is, when blank-verse was first used in dramatic compositions performed at the public theatres of the metropolis?

Gosson, in his *School of Abuse*, 1579, mentions 'two prose books played at the Bell Savage'; and *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, already examined, is an instance of an early 'history' in prose, although printed to look like metre. These seem to have been exceptions to the ordinary rule, for Gosson, in his *Plays Confuted in five Actions*, tells us that 'poets send their verses to the stage upon such feet, as continually are rolled up in rhyme'. He says nothing of blank-verse, and there is little doubt that, when he wrote, prose and rhyme only were used in popular dramatic exhibitions.

Blank-verse was first employed in plays performed at the public theatres of London, about the year 1586, four or five years after Gosson had published his *Plays Confuted in five Actions*. The evidence of this fact is contained in the epistle by Thomas Nash 'to the Gentlemen Students of both Universities', prefixed to Robert Greene's *Menaphon*, printed in 1587. We there meet with the following passage:—

'I am not ignorant how eloquent our gowned age is grown of late, so that every mechanical mate abhorreth the English he was born to, and plucks, with a solemn periphrasis, his *ut vales* from the ink-horn: which I impute not so much to the perfection of arts, as to the servile imitation of *vain-glorious tragedians*, who contend not so seriously to excel in action, as to embowel the clouds in a speech of comparison; thinking themselves more than initiated in poet's immortality, if they but once get Boreas by the beard, and the heavenly Bull by the dewlap. But herein I cannot so fully bequeath them to folly, as their idiot *art-masters*, that intrude themselves to our ears as the al-

chymists of eloquence, who (mounted on *the stage* of arrogance) think to outbrave better pens with *the swelling bombast of bragging blank-verse*. Indeed, it may be the engrafted overflow of some kill-cow conceit, that overcloyeth their imagination with a more than drunken resolution, being not extemporal in the invention of any other means to vent their manhood, commits the digestion of their choleric incumbrances to the spacious volubility of *a drumming decasyllabon*. Amongst this kind of men, that *repose eternity in the mouth of a player*, I can but engross some deep-read school-men or grammarians, who, having no more learning in their skull than will serve to take up a commodity, nor art in their brain than was nourished in a serving-man's idleness, will take upon them to be the ironical censors of all, when God and poetry doth know they are the simplest of all.'

Hence it is evident that blank-verse had been employed upon the common stage prior to 1587, when the work from which the above quotation is made bears date. Nash talks of 'the swelling bombast of bragging blank-verse', which he also calls 'a drumming decasyllabon', and ridicules those who 'reposed eternity in the mouth of a player'. The turn of expression in the whole passage also seems to show clearly, that independently of any general censure of the dramatic poets of the time, Nash had also some particular individual allusion. Having been entered of St. John's College in 1585 he was obliged to leave the University in 1587, without taking his degree,¹ and coming to London he joined his friend Greene, who was supporting himself by his prolific pen:—

¹ He was engaged with some friend in writing a satirical piece called *Terminus et non Terminus*: his friend was expelled, and it is doubtful if Nash did not share his disgrace and punishment: at all events, he could not take his degree; and this circumstance is alluded to in the epistle or 'England to her three Daughters', in *Polimanteia*, 1595, where, speaking of Nash and Harvey, the writer says, 'Cambridge, make thy two children friends: thou hast been unkind to the one [Nash] *to wean him before his time*, and too fond upon the other [possibly Greene], to keep him so long without preferment.'—Sign. Q 4.

'Give me the man' (says Nash of Greene, in another part of the address above quoted) 'whose extemporal vein in any humour will excell our greatest *art-masters*' deliberate thoughts; whose inventions, quicker than his eye, will challenge the proudest rhetorician to the contention of the like perfection with the like expedition'. It will be observed that Nash twice employs the term 'art-master' contemptuously, and we apprehend that it has reference to some individual who had set himself up as a sort of rival of Greene, or, in the phrase of Nash, 'to outbrave a better pen'. The prefatory matter to one of the productions of Greene, which was published in the year following that in which Nash's address 'to the Gentlemen Students of both Universities' was printed, may enable us to decide to whom the term 'art-master' alludes.

Greene's tract *Perimedes, the Blacksmith*, appeared in 1588; and in the epistle 'to the Gentlemen readers', after stating that he still keeps his 'old course to palter up something *in prose*', he goes on to mention, that the motto he usually prefixed to his productions, *omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci*, had been had in derision' by 'two gentlemen poets', because (says Greene) 'I could not make my verses jet on the stage in tragical buskins, every word filling the mouth like the faburden of Bow-Bell, daring God out Heaven with that atheist *Tamburlan*, or blaspheming with the mad priest of the sun'. Farther on he laughs at the 'prophetical spirits' of those 'who set the end of scholarism in an *English blank-verse*', and who had accused him of not being able to write it. Greene, at this date, was a highly popular author of pamphlets, if not of plays; and it is a curious fact, to be gathered from what he adds, that his incapacity in the last respect was then important enough to have been even brought in some way upon one of the theatres:—'If I speak darkly, Gentlemen' (he proceeds), 'and offend with this digression, I crave pardon, in that I but

answer in print what they have offered *on the Stage*.¹ Greene seems to have felt very sore at the charge that he could not write blank-verse, and make it 'jet in tragical buskins' as well as some of his contemporaries; and it is, therefore, fair to infer that prior to the date when he was writing, 1588, he had made the attempt. He particularly specifies two plays of this kind that had been successful—one in which 'the mad priest of the sun' was exhibited, and the other *Tamburlaine*, the author of which was Christopher Marlow. It is to be observed that Marlow took his degree of *Master of Arts* in the very year when Nash was unable to do so in consequence of being obliged to quit Cambridge in disgrace; and we apprehend that it is to Marlow Nash alludes, under the term 'art-master', in the quotations already made from his address prefixed to Greene's *Menaphon*, printed in 1587.

We thus arrive at the conclusion, that Christopher Marlow was our first poet who used blank-verse in dramatic compositions performed in public theatres—that *Tamburlaine* was the name of the play in which the successful experiment was made, and that it had been acted anterior to 1587. The two parts of *Tamburlaine* (or *Tamerlane*) *the Great* are extant, but nothing is now known of any piece of that date in which the 'Priest of the Sun' formed a character: it must have been one of the innumerable stage productions of that period which unfortunately have not survived.

There are three pieces of evidence to show that Marlow was the author of *Tamburlaine the Great*, two of which have never yet been noticed. The most conclusive is the subse-

¹ Perhaps something in the same way that Ben Jonson subsequently, in his *Case is altered*, brought Anthony Munday on the stage in the character of Antonio Balladino, 'Pageant Poet of the City of Milan'. See act I, scene i.

quent entry in Henslowe's MS. *Diary*, preserved at Dulwich College, which escaped the eye of Malone.

'Pd. [paid] unto Thomas Dikkers, the 20th of Desember 1597, for adycyons to *Fosstus* twentie shellinges, and fyve shellinges more for a prolog to *Marloes Tamberlen*:'¹ so in all I saye payde twentye fyve shellinges.'

Here we see Marlow's *Tamburlaine* mentioned in connection with his *Faustus*, to the latter of which Dekker had made some additions, and written a new prologue for the former. The date of the entry seems to show that the Lord Admiral's players had been required to act at Court during the Festivities of Christmas, 1597, and that two of Marlow's plays having been selected by the Master of the Revels, Dekker was called upon to contribute some novelty to both. This testimony may be considered decisive; and it is a known fact that other dramatists were often required to furnish new matter, in the shape of additions and prologues, to the dramatic works of preceding authors. Gabriel Harvey also (the antagonist of Nash), in 1593, just after the death of Marlow in June of that year, speaks of him by the name of Tamberlaine, when there could be no reason for choosing that designation, but that he was the author of the play. It is Harvey's *New Letter of Notable Contents*, 1593, which notices the untimely fate of both Greene and Marlow: in reference to the

¹ We may take this opportunity of mentioning that there was an edition of Marlow's *Tamberlaine the Great* in 1597, 'printed by Richard Jones', of which no notice has ever been taken: the text varies in no material respect from the earlier quartos: it is in the library of the Marquis of Bute. A *History of Tamerlane* was translated from the French and published in 1597; but Marlow's play was printed in 1590, and was founded upon the account in Newton's *Notable Historie of the Saracens*, 1575. See *Bibl. Account of Rare Books*, 1865, ii, 40.

latter, a sonnet appended, entitled, 'Gorgon or the wonderful Year', ends with the following line:—

'Weep, Pauls: thy *Tamberlaine* vouchsafes to die.'

The third proof depends upon the authority of Thomas Heywood, who, according to Henslowe's *Diary*, had written a play in 1596, and who, though young, had been contemporary with Marlow. He published the *Jew of Malta*, in 1633, with an occasional prologue of his own, on its revival at the Cockpit theatre, in which he attributes that play, as well as *Tamburlaine* and *Hero and Leander*, to Marlow, whose name at length is inserted in the margin opposite.¹ Malone's crude notion that *Tamburlaine* was possibly written by Thomas Nash (founded upon an ambiguous expression in *The Black Book*, 1604), is thus refuted on all sides: had

¹ Heywood's lines are the following; and their meaning seems quite plain and intelligible, although the editor of the recent reprint of *Marlow's Works* (vol. i, p. 20), by misplaced ingenuity has endeavoured to give the words a different construction.

'We know not how our play may pass this stage,
But by the best of poets [Marlo] in that age,
The Malta Jew had being and was made;
And he then by the best of actors [Allin] play'd.
In *Hero and Leander* one did gain
A lasting memory; in *Tamburlaine*,
This Jew with others many: th' other wan
The attribute of peerless, being a man
Whom we may rank with (doing no one wrong)
Proteus for shapes, and Roscius for a tongue.'

Heywood here first speaks of the poet as the author of *Hero and Leander*, *Tamburlaine*, *The Jew of Malta*, 'with others many'; and secondly, of the player, who in his department had been peerless. It is not to be understood that Marlow had written a play on the story of *Hero and Leander*: Heywood, of course, alludes to the paraphrase of Musæus, commenced by Marlow and finished by Chapman.

Nash been the author of it, Greene would scarcely have abused it by name in 1588, without laying any stress upon the allusion to it by Nash himself, in the year preceding.

The most reasonable ground for resisting the claim of Marlow to the two parts of *Tamburlaine the Great*, arises out of some obvious defects in its style—that it is turgid and bombastic—that the language is not pure, and that the thoughts are sometimes violent and unnatural. Those who have raised this objection, have never taken into consideration the purpose of the author; and to adduce *Tamburlaine* as our earliest popular dramatic composition in blank-verse is to present it in an entirely new light, most important in considering the question of its merits and defects.

The probability seems to be, that Marlow was likewise the writer of the play in which the 'Priest of the Sun' prominently figured; but putting that point out of sight, as we are without any means of deciding it, we may assert that when writing *Tamburlaine*, Marlow contemplated a most important change and improvement in English dramatic poetry. Until it appeared, plays *upon the public stages* were written, sometimes in prose, but most commonly in rhyme; and the object of Marlow was to substitute blank-verse. His genius was daring and original; he felt that prose was heavy and unattractive, and rhyme unnatural and wearisome; and he determined to make a bold effort, to the success of which we know not how much to attribute of the after excellence even of Shakespeare himself. We cannot suppose that, had Marlow never lived, Shakespeare would have remained content in the clinking shackles of rhyme; but it is certain that in his earlier dramatic compositions, he shows even a greater degree of fondness for it than some of his contemporaries. In an alteration of this kind, a great deal must always depend upon the spirit of the age, which will be sure to find its own instru-

ments to effect it. The expressions Marlow uses in his short prologue to the first part of *Tamburlaine the Great* are important :

‘ From jiggling veins of *rhyming mother wits*,
And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,
We’ll lead you to the stately tent of war,
Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine
Threatening the world with *high astounding terms*,
And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword,
View but his picture in this tragic glass,
And then applaud his fortunes as you please.’¹

The meaning of these lines, in other words, is that the author was about to abandon the use of rhyme, and low conceits fit only for clowns, in order to substitute blank-verse, and heroic deeds told in language to which the audience was not accustomed. On this account, he incurred the unmerited ridicule of the two friends, Nash and Greene; the first, in 1587, charging him with ‘outbraving better pens with the swelling bombast of bragging blank-verse’; and the last, in 1588, accusing him of employing words which ‘filled the mouth like the fa-burden of Bow-bell’. Marlow had a great purpose to accomplish; he had undertaken to wean the multitude from the ‘jiggling veins of rhyming mother-wits’, which, according to Gosson, and many other authorities, were so attractive; and in order to accomplish this object it was necessary to give something in exchange for what he took away. Hence the ‘swelling bombast’ of the style in which much of

¹ It was for this prologue, obviously ill-adapted to the Court in the year 1597, that Dekker was required by Henslowe to substitute another, and for which that poet was paid five shillings. We may be confident that the last line above quoted is misprinted, and that we ought to read *as they pass* for ‘as you please’. It is odd that this obvious emendation should have struck no editor of Marlow.

the two parts of *Tamburlaine the Great* is written. Marlow did not 'set the end of scholarism in an English blank-verse'; but he thought that the substitution of blank-verse for rhyme would be a most valuable improvement in our drama; and many lines 'full of sound and fury', were not inserted in his experimental play because he thought them good, but because he hoped the audience would think them so: he wrote *ad captandum*, and it is unfair to try him by the ordinary rules of good taste and sound criticism.

He brought to his aid everything he could render available upon this occasion, which may in some degree excuse him for adopting the following well-known simile of the almond-tree from Spenser.

'And in my helm a triple plume shall spring,
Spangled with diamonds dancing in the air,
To note me Emperor of the three-fold world;
Like to an almond tree ymounted high
Upon the lofty and celestial mount
Of ever green Selinis, quaintly decked
With blooms more white than Hericina's brows,
Whose tender blossoms tremble every one,
At every little breath that thorough heaven is blown.'¹

These lines are found in the *second part* of *Tamburlaine*, which, with the *first part*, was printed in 1590, the same year in which the three first books of the *Fairy Queen* appeared. Marlow must, therefore, have had access to Spenser's work anterior to its publication; and we know that the poems of Shakespeare, and of other poets, were often circulated among their friends before they were printed. We willingly give Spenser credit for being the original author of the simile, but not by any means for the reasons stated by the editor of a late reprint of Marlow's works: one of them is, that Marlow

¹ Compare Spenser, *F. Q.*, book I, c. vii, st. 32.

has adopted in the last line the alexandrine of Spenser ; which, we are told, 'is an insulated instance of the use of a line of that length throughout the play'. The fact is, that from twenty to thirty examples of similar alexandrines are to be found in the two parts of *Tamburlaine*, and with Marlow the insertion of a line of that length was a usual method of varying his measure.¹ In the second part of *Tamburlaine* we meet also with a whole scene for which the author was indebted to Ariosto ; and if Marlow did not read Italian, which is hardly probable, perhaps he obtained it through the medium of Sir John Harington's translation of the *Orlando Furioso*, while in MS., and before it was printed in 1591. It is to be found in the 29th Book, where Isabella, to save herself from the lawless passion of Rodomont, anoints her neck with a decoction of herbs, which she pretends will render it invulnerable : she then presents her throat to the Pagan, who, believing her assertion, aims a blow and strikes off her head. In Marlow's play, Olympia by precisely the same expedient preserves her honour from Theridamas.

For the sake only of comparison, and not that it is a particularly good specimen, we quote a stanza from the contemporaneous version of Sir John Harington : the resemblance to Spenser is more direct and stronger, but that we need not quote.

'This done, in cheerful sort she open laid
Her naked neck before the beastly Turk,
And bade him strike, for she was not afraid,
She had such skill and trust in this rare work.

¹ Steevens, professing to cite this passage from Marlow's *Tamburlaine*, not only cuts off two syllables for the purpose of avoiding the appearance of an alexandrine, but makes other singular misquotations, which could hardly have proceeded even from extreme carelessness.—See Malone's *Shakespeare by Boswell*, xvii, 86.

He, unadvis'd, and haply overlaid
 With wine that in his idle brain did work,
 Was with her speech so indiscretely led,
 That at one blow he quite cut off her head.'

We are to recollect that the above stanza was printed subsequently to the first publication of *Tamburlaine*, whereas Spenser's simile of the almond tree was published in the year before Marlow's play had come from the press.

Marlow could not have selected for his purpose a better subject than the life and conquests of Tamburlaine, who rose from the lowest grade of life to the loftiest honours of a conqueror's throne: instead of the 'conceits which clownage kept in pay', he carried the spectators 'to the stately tent of war', and took ample room for striking effects and novel situations. He seems, however, to have apprehended that he could not accomplish his great change instantly; and in order, to a certain extent, to gratify the appetite of the mob, he introduced into his performance scenes of low humour and buffoonery, which are omitted in the printed copies, the publisher informing the reader that he considered them derogatory 'to so honourable and stately a history'. The reason for their insertion was the same as for the employment of 'high astounding terms'—not that they were good, but that they would be applauded; and Marlow himself, we apprehend, no more approved of the one than of the other. The popularity of the two parts of *Tamburlaine the Great* cannot be doubted: they are often alluded to by contemporary writers,¹ and in the prologue to the second part, the author acknowledges the 'general welcomes' the first part had re-

¹ *Tamburlaine* is twice mentioned in *The first part of the Tragical Raigne of Selimus, sometime Emperour of the Turks*, 1594, a play written in obvious rivalry of Marlow's popular performance. The author of *Selimus* did not dare, however, to go the full length of his bold precursor,

ceived. It appears by the title-page of the earliest printed edition in 1590, that the two parts were not acted at one theatre, nor on one stage only—‘as they were sundry times most stately showed upon stages in the city of London’.

It is by no means fair, therefore, to examine *Tamburlaine the Great* without bearing this fact in memory :—that it was

and much of the piece is, therefore, in rhyme, in an ambitious strain, but without any originality of thought : the following is not ill-expressed :—

‘Looke how the earth, clad in her sommer’s pride,
Embroydereth her mantle gorgeously
With fragrant hearbes and flowers gaily dide,
Spreading abroad her spangled tapestrie,
Yet under all a loathsome snake doth hide:
Such is our life: under crownes cares do lie,
And feare the scepter still attends upon.
Oh ! who can take delight in kingly throne?’

Blank-verse is also interspersed, thereby, to a certain extent, following up Marlow’s bold experiment, but it is of a heavy, lumbering, and formal kind, as may be judged from the following mixed specimen from one of the best parts of *Selimus*:—

‘Now, faire Natolia, shall thy stately walles
Be overthrowne and beaten to the ground :
My heart within me for revenge still calles.
What, Bajazet, thought’st thou that Acomat
Would put up such a monstrous injurie?
Then had I brought my chivalry in vaine,
And to no purpose drawne my conquering blade,
Which, now unshēath’d, shall not be sheath’d againe
Till it a world of bleeding soules hath made.’

The whole play is full of blood and slaughter, and the author promises, in the second part of his tragedy (which has not survived), to tell of still ‘greater murders’. The printer of *Selimus*, Thomas Creede, has not thought fit, like the printer of *Tamburlaine*, to omit the comic portions, and accordingly we find in it several scenes of the coarsest and most absurd description, intended, by the author, to be very laughable ; and perhaps, at that date he was not altogether disappointed.

the first attempt of the kind, and that Marlow made great sacrifices, as a poet, to promote its success. It will at once account for most of the fustian and hyperbole by which the production unquestionably is disfigured, but which is sometimes of such a striking character, that we must pronounce even its absurdities the work of a man of fervid and exalted genius. Take, for instance, the following speech by Tamburlaine to Cosroe, after the hero has dethroned him, and as an excuse for his own ambition—

‘The thirst of reign and sweetness of a crown,
That caus’d the eldest son of heavenly Ops
To thrust his doating father from his chair
And place himself in the empyreal heaven,
Mov’d me to manage arms against thy state.
What better precedent than mighty Jove?
Nature, that form’d us of four elements,
Warring within our breasts for regiment,
Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds :
Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend
The wondrous architecture of the world,
And measure every wand’ring planet’s course,
Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
And always moving as the restless spheres,
Will us to wear ourselves, and never rest,
Until we reach the ripest fruits of all—
That perfect bliss and sole felicity,
The sweet fruition of an earthly crown.’

This quotation is much in the spirit of the opening scene of the same author’s *Faustus*, the difference being, that the hero there applies to the thirst of knowledge what Tamburlaine says of the thirst of power. No one but a great poet could have written the following piece of hyperbole on the beauty of Zenocrate, when Tamburlaine first beholds her :

' Ah, fair Zenocrate ! Divine Zenocrate !
Fair is too foul an epithet for thee,
That in thy passion for thy country's love,
And fear to see thy kingly father's harm,
With hair dishevell'd wip'st thy watery cheeks,
And, like to Flora in her morning pride,
Shaking her silver tresses in the air,
Rain'st on the earth resolved pearl in showers,
And sprinklest sapphires on thy shining face,
Where Beauty, mother to the Muses, sits
And comments volumes with her ivory pen,
Taking instructions from thy flowing eyes.'

Besides the splendour of the diction, the rhythmical harmony of these passages must be universally admitted, and nothing could be easier than to multiply extracts of the same character : the gorgeous exaggeration of the language is, in some sort, adapted to the

' Souls made of fire and children of the sun,'¹

by whom it is delivered.

Although Marlow's purpose was the substitution of blank-verse for rhyme, he does not scruple, especially in the first part of *Tamburlaine the Great*, to sprinkle couplets, even with

¹ Young has endeavoured to do much the same in his *Revenge*, which, in many parts, is an unconscious imitation of the style of *Tamburlaine*, without the same excuse. He probably never saw Marlow's production ; but, nevertheless, in one place he has fallen upon the very same thought :—Zanga says,

' 'Tis twice three years since that great man—
Great let me call him, for he conquer'd me—
Made me his captive,' etc.

Marlow puts it into a single line, with no injury to the force of the passage : Bajazet exclaims after his fall,

' Great Tamburlaine—great in my overthrow—' etc.

a liberal hand, in order, perhaps, to give greater effect to particular passages, to close speeches soundingly, and, as it were, gradually to wean the popular ear from that to which it had been so long accustomed. In the second part of the play he is more sparing in the use of this jingling appendage; and, taken as a whole, it is written with less violence and extravagance of thought, and with more purity of diction. The fact seems to be, that the great change he attempted was almost at once accomplished, and in the sequel of the same story the author scarcely required this occasional ornament. As one proof, among many, of the completeness, as well as suddenness, of the alteration, it may be noticed that the Moral-play called *The Three Ladies of London*, printed in 1584, is written in rhyme, while the second part of the same subject, which followed it at no great interval, and which was published in 1590, entitled *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*, is in blank-verse. In fact, after 1587, dramatic performances were seldom wholly in rhyme, as far as we can judge from those that are extant.

The second part of *Tamburlaine the Great*, as a spectacle, must have been quite as captivating to the multitude as the first. In it occurs the scene which has been ridiculed by Shakespeare and other dramatists,¹ but which must have produced, as was intended by the author, a striking effect upon an auditory accustomed, until Marlow wrote, only to 'the jiggling veins of rhyming mother wits', and the 'conceits which clownage kept in pay'. Tamburlaine, in his chariot, is drawn upon the stage by the kings of Trebizond and Syria; but even here we meet with glimpses of the brightest poetry through clouds of inflated absurdity:—

¹ In addition to the instances pointed out in the note to *Henry IV*, part 2, act ii, scene 4, *The Fleire*, by Edward Sharpham, may be mentioned.—See Sig. C 4, edit. 1615. This play was first printed in 1607.

'The horse that guide the golden eye of heaven,
And blow the morning from their nostrils,
Making their fiery gait above the clouds,
Are not so honoured'¹——

When Zenocrate is at the point of death, Tamburlaine says,

'Now walk the Angels on the walls of heaven,
As sentinels, to warn the immortal souls
To entertain divine Zenocrate ;'

and nothing can be finer than Tamburlaine's description, near his last moments, of Death waiting to seize him, but shrinking from his terrible look :—

'See where my slave, the ugly monster, Death,
Shaking and quivering, pale and wan with fear,
Stands aiming at me with his murdering dart,
Who flies away at every glance I give,
And when I look away comes stealing on.'

We have said thus much in vindication of Marlow, and of the purpose of his work, because neither have hitherto been properly understood, and justly appreciated. With regard to the execution, independent of the mere point of versification, it is necessary to add that time and place are set at defiance, and that the scene of action is changed, in the same act, from Persia to Scythia, from thence to Georgia, and again to Morocco, without any explanation beyond the mention now and then by one of the characters, soon after the change, of the place the stage is intended to represent. Where the imagination only was appealed to, this was a matter of no difficulty, especially with the additional information supplied by

¹ Marlow, in this passage, was plagiarised by the anonymous author of the tragedy of *Cæsar and Pompey*, 1607.

'He on his golden-trapped palfreys rides,
That from their nostrils do the morning blow.'

The first scene of act ii contains a similar theft from *Spenser*.

a board, on which the name of the country or city was inscribed, and which was not unfrequently employed, where the necessary intelligence could not otherwise be conveniently given to the audience. We shall now proceed to notice Marlow's other performances, having, we apprehend, said enough to show that *Tamburlaine*, as a dramatic poem, considered by itself, is very far indeed from contemptible, and taken with relation to the circumstances under which, and the purpose for which, it was written, that it merits high admiration.

Marlow's *Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* in all probability was written very soon after his *Tamburlaine the Great*, as in 1588; 'a ballad of the *Life and Death of Doctor Faustus*' (which in the language of that time, might mean either the play or a metrical composition founded upon its chief incidents), was licensed to be printed. The earliest known edition of Marlow's Tragedy is dated in 1604, and there is very good reason for thinking that much had then been added to it, with which the original author had no concern. It seems to have been written in the first instance for the Lord Admiral's players, and from an entry in Henslowe's *Diary*, already quoted, of the year 1597, we learn that it had been performed so long and so often, as to require 'additions' by Dekker: in 1602, William Birde and Samuel Rowley were paid 4*l.* for farther 'additions'. As the usual price of a new play at this date was only 6*l.*, or at most 8*l.*, we may conclude that the additions last made were very considerable, and with them, probably, the piece was printed in 1604.¹ This may account for the introduction of a good deal of buffoonery, in-

¹ At a later date, some fresh alterations were made, as is evidenced by the edition of 1663, in which a scene at Rome is transferred to Constantinople, and another interpolated from *The Rich Jew of Malta*. Henslowe notices the performance of *Faustus* in 1594 and 1597; in the last instance, perhaps, as *noveltied* by Dekker's additions.

tended to be comic, and which no doubt was well relished by the auditory : some of it might, however, have originated with Marlow, and the printer of his *Tamburlaine*, 1590, it will be recollected, exercised his discretion in leaving out the comic portion of that performance.

Faustus was intended to follow up the design, which may almost be said to have been accomplished in *Tamburlaine*, and to establish the use of blank-verse on the public stage. Here the poet, wishing to astonish, and to delight by astonishing, has called in the aid of magic and supernatural agency, and has wrought from his materials, a drama full of power, novelty, interest, and variety. All the serious scenes of *Faustus* eminently excite both pity and terror.

Before we enter upon a cursory examination of the ingredients and structure of *Faustus*, it may be proper to remark, that we shall follow it up by a similar criticism upon his other plays (as nearly as we can judge in the order in which they were written), with a view to trace the gradual improvement of his style and versification, and to show that he often introduced into his 'mighty line' (as Ben Jonson calls it), not less vigour and majesty than Shakespeare, with such varieties of pause, inflection, and modulation, as left our greatest dramatist little more to do than to follow his example. This position supposes, as we have already endeavoured to establish, that Shakespeare had not written any of his original plays prior to 1593 (when Marlow was killed), although, anterior to that year, he had certainly employed himself in altering and improving for representation some of the works of older dramatists. It is, of course, important to trace the gradual improvement of blank-verse in the hands of Marlow ; and we may be excused for dwelling upon the subject more at large, because it has been totally neglected by those who have treated of the versification of Shakespeare, who do not seem to be aware how comparatively

little he added to the force, richness, or melody of what one of our elder critics upon English poetry has aptly denominated 'the licentiate Iambic'.¹

The body of Boswell's *Essay on the Phraseology and Metre of Shakespeare* is a singular contradiction to its title, for while he devotes many pages to the style and peculiarities of preceding poets, he only just before the close 'calls the reader's attention to the important change which Shakespeare effected in our dramatic versification'; and the three pages which follow, as far as they prove anything, establish that Shakespeare in truth effected no change at all. Boswell admits that Marlow improved our versification, but it never seems to have occurred to him to inquire who made the first bold attempt in popular plays to throw off the trammels of rhyme, and in this respect to produce a more or less complete revolution in the public taste.

It will be evident that the long use of rhyme, in which the ear waited for the recurrence of the corresponding sound, led at first to the formation and employment of what may be considered and termed *couplets in blank verse*; in which the pauses occurred at the end of the lines, and the sense was only completed with the completion of the couplet. Hence the weight and monotony of the earlier attempts of the kind in Sackville, Gascoigne, and, although in a less degree, in Hughes. This defect is certainly also to be found in Marlow's first experiment, as may be seen in the preceding quotations from *Tamburlaine*; and when he subsequently produced his *Faustus* he had not yet learned to avoid it. The following lines are given to Faustus, after his first interview with Mephostophilis and before he has entered into the infernal compact, by subscribing it with his own blood—

¹ Thomas Campion, in his *Observations on the Art of English Poesie*, 1602. Chap. iv.

‘ Had I as many souls as there be stars,
I’d give them all for Mephostophilis.
By him I’ll be great emperor of the world,
And make a bridge thorough the moving air
To pass the ocean with a band of men :
I’ll join the hills that bind the Afric shore,
And make that country continent to Spain,
And both contributory to my crown.
The Emperor shall not live but by my leave,
Nor any potentate in Germany.’

Here the words terminating the lines are nearly all monosyllables, and each line runs as if a rhyme were wanting, and as if it had been omitted by accident, rather than by design. Alterations were made in the play from time to time, even by Marlow himself, and it is therefore impossible to speak decisively upon the point; but, as the piece stands in the edition of 1604, the author improved his blank-verse even as he proceeded. The subsequent passage is from near the middle of *Faustus*, after the hero has been warned by his good angel to repent—

‘ My heart is harden’d : I cannot repent !
Scarce can I name salvation, faith or heaven :
Swords, poison, halters and envenom’d steel
Are laid before me to dispatch myself ;
And long ere this I should have done the deed,
Had not sweet pleasure conquer’d deep despair.
Have I not made blind Homer sing to me
Of Alexander’s love and CEnon’s death ?
And hath not he, that built the walls of Thebes
With ravishing sounds of his melodious harp,
Made music with my Mephostophilis ?
Why should I die then, or basely despair ?
I am resolv’d ! Faustus shall not repent.’

The monosyllabic closes to the lines are still continued, but what forcible variety is given to them by the tri-syllable 'ravishing', and by the change of the accent in the words 'basely' and 'Faustus'. It was not meant that we should read 'basely' and 'Faustus', for the words were never so accentuated; but the poet purposely inserted them for the sake of lessening the sameness of the cadences. The verse rivals the music it celebrates, and we may decide, with some confidence, that these lines, and such as these, came from the pen of Marlow, and, as yet, from that pen alone. In the last act we meet with still further varieties: while Faustus is awaiting the last moment of his latest hour, expecting every instant to be seized by the fiend to whom he had bound himself in consideration of the grant of supernatural power, he says;

'The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike,
The devil will come, and Faustus must be damn'd!
Oh, I'll leap up to Heaven!—Who pulls me down?
See where Christ's blood streams in the firmament.
One drop of blood will save me! Oh, my Christ!—
Rend not my heart for naming of my Christ.
Yet will I call on him—Oh, spare me, Lucifer!
Where is it now?—'tis gone!
And see a threatening arm and angry brow.
Mountains and hills! come, come, and fall on me,
And hide me from the heavy wrath of heaven!'

What language, or what form of verse could be better adapted to the situation of Faustus at this terrible crisis of his fate? Here we find nothing like monotony, but a constant change of pause and inflection, with the introduction of an alexandrine and a hemistich to aid the effect. Shakespeare constantly uses both, in plays the versification of which may be deemed most perfect. It is to be added, that in *Faustus* Marlow almost entirely rejects rhyme, even in occa-

sional couplets; and several scenes of plain prose are also introduced—possibly by him, as the same circumstance is to be remarked in *Tamburlaine*.

The time supposed to be occupied in the course of the tragedy is four-and-twenty years; and as Marlow appears to have followed the story in the 'old Romance of Faustus', the scene often passes from country to country with the rapidity of thought: all the reader or spectator has to do is to imagine the lapse of the required time or distance.

If it be objected to Marlow that, in his *Massacre at Paris*, he appealed to vulgar prejudices, he did no more than Dryden and Lee attempted a whole century afterwards. The only old edition of it was printed without date (probably about the year 1595); but from a clear allusion in it to the Spanish Armada, we may pretty safely conclude that it was produced not long after 1588.¹ We have it evidently only in a very mutilated state, and possibly it was at best a very hasty production, got up for a temporary purpose. The earliest entry of its performance, by Henslowe's company, is dated January 30, 1592, when it was called *The Guise*, from the Duke of Guise, who, of course, is a very prominent character. We have seen that at a subsequent date John Webster either wrote another play with the title of *The Guise*, or made large additions to Marlow's *Massacre at Paris*, which was subsequently called *The Massacre of France*. The printed copy, however, is too early to include anything by Webster.

The Massacre at Paris possibly, in point of date, preceded *Faustus*: if it were written afterwards it is no improvement in versification, and that, perhaps, might have been a sufficient reason for noticing it first, if *Faustus* had not apparently been intended by its author to follow up the poetical enterprise

¹ 'Did he not cause the King of Spain's huge fleet
To threaten England and to menace me?'—Act iii, scene 2.

undertaken in *Tamburlaine*. It has no pretensions to dramatic interest, and the incidents are confusedly treated, while we might 'lay the summer's dust with the showers of blood', shed in the progress of it. Some portions are, nevertheless, vigorously penned, and the character of the Duke of Guise is not ill sustained. The following quotation will illustrate that character, and at the same time exhibit the kind of blank-verse generally employed: it is part of a soliloquy spoken by Guise.

'Now, Guise, begin those deep engender'd thoughts
To burst abroad, those never-dying flames,
Which cannot be extinguish'd but by blood.
Oft have I levell'd, and at last have learn'd,
That peril is the chiefest way to happiness,
And resolution honour's fairest aim.
What glory is there in a common good,
That hangs for every peasant to achieve?
That like I best that flies beyond my reach.
Set me to scale the high Pyramides,
And thereon set the diadem of France;
I'll either rend it with my nails to nought,
Or mount the top with my aspiring wings,
Although my downfall be the deepest hell.'

With regard to this play, a singular proof has been preserved, if indeed any were wanted, of the imperfect state in which it appears in the old printed copy, published perhaps from what could be taken down, in short-hand or otherwise, during the representation. It is one leaf of an original contemporary MS. of this play, possibly as it came from the hands of Marlow, which shows how much was omitted, and how injuriously the rest was garbled. Even the names of the characters were mistaken, and he who is called *Mugeron* in the old edition was, in fact, named *Minion*, consistently with

his situation and habits. We copy the MS. *literatim*, and the reader will be able to compare it with part of the play, as it is republished in *Marlow's Works*.¹

'Enter a Souldier with a muskett.

Souldier.—Now, sir, to you that dares make a duke a cuckolde and use a counterfeyt key to his privye chamber : though you take out none but your owne treasure, yett you put in that displeases him, and fill up his rome that he shold occupye. Herein, sir, you forestalle the markett and set up your standinge where you shold not. But you will saye you leave him rome enoghe besides. That's no answer : he's to have the choyce of his owne freeland, yf it be not too free ; there's the questione. Now, for where he is your landlorde, you take upon you to be his, and will needs enter by defaulte ; whatt thoughe you were once in possession, yett comminge upon you once unawares, he frayde you out againe : therefore your entrye is mere intrusione. This is against the law, sir ; and though I come not to keepe possessione, as I wold I might, yet I come to keepe you out, sir. You are wellcome, sir. Have at you. *[He kills him.]*

Enter Minion.

Minion.—Trayterouse Guise ! ah, thou hast morthered me !

Enter Guise.

Hold the[e], tall Soldier : take the[e] this and flye. *[Exit.]*
 Thus fall, imperfett exhalatione,
 Which our great sonn of Fraunce cold not effecte ;
 A fyery meteor in the fermament.
 Lye there, the kinge's delyght and Guise's scorne !
 Revenge it, Henry, yf thou liste or darst :
 I did it onely in dispight of thee.
 Fondlie hast thou incenste the Guise's sowle,
 That of it selfe was hote enough to worke
 Thy just degestione with extreamest shame.
 The armye I have gatherd now shall ayme
 More at thy ende then exterpatione ;

¹ Act ii, scene 6, vol. ii, p. 232.

And when thou thinkst I have forgotten this,
 And that thou most reposest in my faythe,
 Then will I wake thee from thy folishe dreame,
 And lett thee see thie selfe my prysoner.

[*Excunt.*]

It is rarely, indeed, that an opportunity can be thus obtained, of comparing any part, however small, of an old printed copy of a play with a contemporary MS., in order to show what was omitted. Here, much of what falls from the Soldier is not printed, and only four lines of the speech by Guise, which is as good as any other part of the play.

The Jew of Malta, by Marlow, contains, in its original prologue, spoken by Machiavel, an allusion to *The Massacre at Paris*, which had preceded it. It was entered by Henslowe in his list in February 1591-2, but it does not then seem to have been a new play, and it was probably written about 1589 or 1590. The plot was invented, and the characters formed, to take powerful hold of the vulgar mind, and to gratify it by the exhibition of blood and horror to an extent that appears in our day either ludicrous or revolting. The character of Barabas is not human, but it is nevertheless consistent with the notions of a Jew entertained by our ancestors. In many scenes the versification is vigorous, rich, and harmonious; in others, it is loose, careless, and irregular, but never languid: in every part it appears to be the work of an energetic mind, with an imagination 'all air and fire'. Marlow must have written with facility and rapidity, which renders it the more likely that Nash alluded to him in 1587, as a person who attempted to rival Greene in 'the contention of the like perfection with the like expedition'. His life was very short—he was devoted to pleasure, and yet he has left behind him many plays and poems. The following extract opens the second act of *The Jew of Malta*, and the first line affords another instance of the redundancy of a syllable in the middle

of a verse, which was to be retrenched in the recitation, so as to observe both time and measure. Barabas speaks, after having been deprived of his wealth—

‘ Thus like the sad presaging raven, that tolls
The sick man’s passport in her hollow beak,¹
And in the shadow of the silent night
Doth shake contagion from her sable wings,
Vex’d and tormented runs poor Barabas,
With fatal curses towards the Christians.
The uncertain pleasures of swift-footed time
Have ta’en their flight and left me in despair,
And of my former riches rest[s] no more
But bare remembrance—like a soldier’s scar
That hath no farther comfort for his maim.’

These lines are an improvement upon any we have had occasion before to quote : and the subsequent passage, also

¹ This play was undoubtedly very popular, and the two lines which open this quotation are cited, with some slight variation, in an epigram upon Thomas Deloney, the famous ballad-writer, in the anonymous collection of epigrams and satires, entitled, *Skialetheia or the Shadowe of Truth*, printed in 1598. It is in the following terms, the two borrowed lines being in Italic—

‘ *Like to the fatall ominous Raven, which tolls
The sick man’s dirge within his hollow beake,
So every paper-clothed post in Poules
To thee (Deloney) mourningly doth speake,
And tells thee of thy hempen tragedie :
The wracks of hungry Tyburne nought to thine ;
Such massacres made of thy balladry :
And thou in grieve for woe thereof must pine.
At every street’s end Fuscus rimes are read,
And thine in silence must be buried.*

The writer of this epigram no doubt quoted from memory, as although *The Jew of Malta* was entered for publication on the Stationers’ Books in 1594, it was not printed until 1633, when it was edited by worthy old Thomas Heywood.

spoken by the hero, is a still happier illustration of the contrivances used by Marlow to introduce variety into his pauses: it opens strikingly by a broken verse—

‘I am betrayed !
'Tis not five hundred crowns that I esteem ;
I am not mov'd at that : this angers me,
That he who knows I love him as myself
Should write in this imperious vein. Why, Sir,
You know I have no child, and unto whom
Should I leave all but unto Ithamore ?’

We cannot sympathise with Barabas, because he is a mere monster, and his daughter is, in the first instance, too instrumental in her father's bloody purposes, and afterwards too insignificant, to excite compassion in her death. The whole structure of the tragedy is confused, exaggerated, and improbable ; but we ought, in fairness to the genius of the author, to recollect how imperfectly and confusedly the manuscripts of plays were at that date usually made up.

Marlow and Nash were not acquainted with each other in 1587, and Greene was at that date upon bad terms with the former, of whom he appears to have been not a little envious. It is likely that, before the death of Greene, Nash and Marlow, by similarity of pursuits as dramatic authors, mutual admiration of each other's talents, and a common love of good fellowship, were brought together, and the result was a play, which they wrote in conjunction, under the title of *The Tragedy of Dido, Queen of Carthage*. We shall speak of this production, and of the probable share of each author in it, when we criticise the works of Nash.

If not the last, certainly one of the most perfect of Marlow's dramatic productions is his historical play of *The troublesome Reign and lamentable Death of Edward the Second*, which was entered on the books of the Stationers' Company in the

month following that of the death of its author.¹ Although it preceded the dramas of Shakespeare, founded upon events detailed in our Chronicles, it is similar to them in point of construction, and like them is in itself a vast improvement upon such performances as *The famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, and the old *King John*: whether any play upon the story of Edward II was in existence before Marlow wrote his tragedy, by which he might possibly be aided, is not known. Here the author's versification is exhibited in its greatest excellence, and successful experiments are made in nearly all those improvements for which Shakespeare has generally had exclusive credit. The character of Richard II seems modelled, in no slight degree, upon that of Edward II; and without attempting a parallel, the reader will be able, as we proceed, to make at least a partial comparison: in point of versification, Shakespeare's performance presents no variety of rhythm that may not be found in the work of Marlow.

The judicious use of alexandrines, for the purpose of relieving the monotony of passages, has been before remarked, and many instances of the same kind may be gathered from his *Edward the Second*. We will only quote a few of them.

- 'But, for we know thou art a noble gentleman.'
- 'Thou com'st from Mortimer and his accomplices.'
- 'To make me miserable! here receive my crown.'
- 'Further, ere this letter was seal'd Lord Berkley came.'
- 'Oh, level all your looks upon these daring men.'

It can hardly fail to be observed, that in these examples the pause is varied. Spenser, in his *Fairy Queen*, commonly makes the cæsura fall after the sixth-syllable, which, strictly speaking, is the case with only the last line of those that pre-

¹ Marlow was killed in June 1593, and his *Edward II* was entered in July of that year, but not published until 1598.

cede : as Marlow's was to be spoken language, he well knew that to observe this regularity of pause would have an injurious effect. Malone and others have laid great stress upon the force and variety given to the versification of Shakespeare by the insertion of redundant syllables : lines of this description, the result of design and not of carelessness, are so numerous in *Edward the Second*, that it would be almost idle to make any selection, were not redundant syllables sometimes employed in it so happily, that we cannot refrain from subjoining two or three specimens, in connexion with other lines which are regularly formed.

'Away ! poor Gaveston, *that* has no friend but me ;
Do what they can we'll live in Tynmouth here ;
And so I walk with him about the walls,
What care I, though the Earls begirt us round ?'

——— 'Now get thee to thy lords,
And tell them I will come to chastise them
For murdering Gaveston. Hie *thee*, get thee gone !
Edward, with fire and sword, follows *at* thy heels.'

'These hands were never stain'd with *innocent* blood,
Nor shall they now be tainted with a king's.'

These are proofs of the truth of Tyrwhitt's remark, that in English a redundant syllable may be admitted into any part of the verse. In the first of the above examples, the redundant syllable seems used chiefly for the sake of lightening the weight of the rather formal lines which succeed it : in the second, it adds greatly to the force and impetuosity of the sentiment expressed ; and in the last, we see how much the beauty of the line is increased by the employment of a dactyl instead of a trochee : 'innocent' may be pronounced as a dissyllable, but to the manifest detriment of the metre.

Malone mentions (in a note to *Henry VI*, Part 3, act i,

scene i), that 'neither', 'either', 'whether', etc., are used by Shakespeare as monosyllables, as if they had been sounded as dissyllables by the poets who preceded him; but he had this peculiarity at least in common with, if he did not derive it from, Marlow, as the following lines will sufficiently show.

' *Whither* goes my lord of Coventry so fast ?
' Madam, *whither* walks your Majesty so fast ?
 Either, banish him that was the cause thereof.'
' That *whether* I will or no, thou must depart.'
' *Thither* shall your honour go, and so, farewell.'

Whether Shakespeare were or were not indebted to Marlow for this and other improvements, it is certain that Marlow so far deserves the name of an inventor; because, before his time, this mode of producing an agreeable and enlivening change in the run of dramatic blank-verse was, we think, unknown. In all these cases the line, properly spoken, occupies no more time than if it had been composed strictly of ten syllables. In not a few instances, we find that Marlow's lines have only nine syllables; and such is sometimes the case with Shakespeare's most mature compositions: it is at least doubtful, whether both poets did not purposely leave them thus defective; and it will generally be found, that in such lines there is some one word necessarily so emphatic, that the delivery of it requires the same time as if the line had been regulated by the most patient finger-counting versifier. Marlow, and Shakespeare after him, wrote by the unerring guidance of a correct ear, and not by dissecting the number of syllables: the latter may be a method of composing measure, but not of writing poetry.

The use of hemistichs and imperfect verses, no matter in what part of a speech, was usually the effect of design and not of negligence; and here also Marlow set the example which was followed with alacrity by Shakespeare.

This enquiry into the versification of Marlow may be to the full as tedious as instructive; but it was necessary, in order to put the matter on its true footing, and to establish the unquestionable obligations of dramatic poetry to the first and great improver of blank-verse. We subjoin two passages from *Edward the Second*, which we consider striking proofs of his skill in the management of our language, for the purpose of the drama in particular, and which possess at once the three great requisites of richness, harmony, and variety. The first is marked according to the value and weight of the syllables, as denoted by the accent and meaning of the words.

Gaveston.—Ōh, treāchēroūs Wārwick, thūs tō wrōng thy friēnd !

James.—I sēe it is yoŭr life thēsē arms pŭrsŭe.

Gav.—Weāpōnlēss mŭst I fāl, ānd diē īn bānds ?

Oh, mŭst this day bē pērīōd ōf my life,
Cēntrē ōf all my bliss ! And yē bē mēn,
Spēed tō thē Kīng.

Warwick.—My lōrd ōf Pēmbroke's mēn,

Strive yōu nō longēr—I will hāve thāt Gāvestōn.

James.—Yoŭr Lōrdshīp dōth dīshōnōr tō yoŭrsēlf,

And wrōng oŭr lōrd, yoŭr hōnōrāblē friēnd,

Warw.—Nō, Jamēs : it is my cōuntry's cāuse I fōllōw.

Gō, tākē thē villāin Sōldiērs cōme, āwāy.

Wē 'll mākē quīck wōrk. Cōmmēnd mē tō yoŭr māstēr,
My friēnd, ānd tēll hīm thāt I wātch'd it wēll.

Cōme, lēt thy shādōw pārlēy wīth kīng Edwārd.

Gav.—Treāchēroūs Eārl, shāl nōt I sēe thē Kīng ?

Warw.—Thē Kīng ōf Heāven pērhaps ; nō ōthēr Kīng.'

In this quotation no one line reads precisely like another; and it will be remarked, that the agreeable diversity is importantly assisted by the free use of trochees, instead of monosyllables, at the close of several verses. Trochees were known, it is true, long before Marlow wrote, and they are

found scantily dispersed over the wearisome expanse of *Ferrex and Porrex*; but Marlow was the first to discover their beauty and utility, and therefore to insert them frequently. The second passage we shall quote, in proof of Marlow's excellence as a writer of blank-verse, is chiefly from one of the beautiful and affecting speeches given to the unhappy Edward, after he has been deposed by his Queen and Mortimer.

'*Leicester*.—Be patient, good my lord : cease to lament.

Imagine Killingworth-castle were your court,
And that you lay for pleasure here a space,
Not of compulsion or necessity.

Edward.—Leicester, if gentle words might comfort me,
Thy speeches long ago had eas'd my sorrows,
For kind and loving hast thou always been.
The griefs of private men are soon allay'd,
But not of kings. The forest deer, being struck,
Runs to an herb that closeth up the wounds ;
But when the imperial lion's flesh is gored,
He rends and tears it with his wrathful paw,
[And], highly scorning that the lowly earth
Should drink his blood, mounts up to the air.'

The last line of this fine quotation is an instance of a verse deficient of a syllable, but not therefore defective in time or measure: the important word 'mounts' is to be dwelt upon with peculiar force and emphasis for the length of two inferior syllables, and the harmony of the rhythm is thus preserved. Had not this peculiarity been intentional, how easy it would have been for the poet to write '*it* mounts up to the air', or 'mounts *into* the air'.

It has been asserted by Chalmers, without qualification, and as certainly without proof, that Marlow was the author of *The True Tragedie of Richard Duke of York*.¹ He had a copy of

¹ *Supplemental Apology*, p. 292.

this old play in his possession, dated in 1595, two years after the death of Marlow,¹ but it nowhere appears that he wrote it, though it is possible he might be concerned in it. There is, however, as much reason for assigning also to him the history of *Henry the Sixth*, and the first part of *The whole Contention between the two famous Houses, Lancaster and Yorke*: they were all three in being before Shakespeare began to write for the stage; and after he commenced his theatrical career, he re-dressed the first part of *The whole Contention*, etc., and *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*, which now are known by the titles of the second and third parts of *Henry VI*. It is

¹ The story of Marlow's death has been differently related, but it seems now ascertained that he was killed by his rival in love: Marlow found his rival with the lady to whom he was attached, and rushed upon him; but his antagonist, being the stronger, thrust the point of Marlow's own dagger into his head. This event occurred at Deptford, where, according to the register of St. Nicholas Church, Marlow was buried on June 1st, 1593, and it is also there recorded that he was 'slain by Francis Archer'. The following relation of this circumstance, which seems to be mistaken in the locality, has never yet been quoted. It is from *The Thunderbolt of God's Wrath against hard-hearted and stiffe-necked sinners*, etc., by Edm. Rudiere, 1618. 4to.

'We read of one Marlow a Cambridge scholler, who was a poet and a filthy play-maker: this wretche accounted that meeke servant of God, Moses, to be but a conjurer, and our sweete Saviour but a seducer and deceiver of the people. But harken, ye brain-sicke and prophane poets and players, that bewitch idle eares with foolish vanities, what fell upon this prophane wretch:—having a quarrell against one whom he met in a streete in London, and would have stab'd him; but the partie perceiving his villany prevented him with catching his hand and turning his owne dagger into his braines, and so blaspheming and cursing he yeelded up his stinking breath. Marke this, ye players, that live by making fooles laugh at sinne and wickednesse.'—The substance of this narrative is taken from Beard's *Theatre of God's Judgments*, 1598, but Beard was mistaken in his assertion that the tragical incident occurred in London: Marlow was unquestionably killed in Deptford, and in the chamber of his mistress. He was buried in Deptford.

plausibly conjectured that Shakespeare never touched the first part of *Henry VI*, as it stands in his works, and that it is merely the old play on the early events of that reign, which was most likely written about 1589. As there is nothing to fix any of these as the property of Marlow, it is needless here to enter into an examination of them, as regards their structure or versification. What Shakespeare contributed to the second and third parts of *Henry VI* may be seen by a comparison of them with the two old quartos reprinted by Steevens, in 1766. Greene may possibly have had a hand in the authorship of *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*, and there is a striking coincidence between a passage in that play, and another in Greene's *Alphonsus* (not printed until 1599, although written before 1592), which in this view deserves notice.—Gloster, in *The True Tragedy*, etc., while stabbing Henry VI the second time, exclaims—

‘If any spark of life remain in thee,
Down, down to hell, and say I sent thee thither.’

In Greene's *Alphonsus*, the following lines, delivered on a somewhat similar occasion, are met with.

‘Go pack thou hence unto the Stygian lake ; . . .
And if he ask thee who did send thee down,
Alphonsus say, who now must wear thy crown.’

For reasons already assigned, *Lust's Dominion* is excluded from the list of Marlow's plays. It was, in fact, the work of Dekker, Haughton, and Day.

ON
ROBERT GREENE AND HIS WORKS.

ROBERT GREENE, who died in September 1592,¹ is perhaps entitled to be considered the poet who immediately followed Marlow, in his successful experiment to bring blank-verse into use on the public stage. At least it is certain that Greene attempted dramatic composition in blank-verse prior to 1588, because he so asserts, though somewhat ambiguously, in the prefatory epistle to his *Perimides the Blacksmith*, which was printed in that year.

He was a poet who obtained an extraordinary reputation at

¹ His fatal illness was occasioned by eating and drinking immoderately of red-herrings and Rhenish wine. In 1594 appeared a very rare collection of fourteen 'Sonnets' (as the author terms them), under the title of *Greene's Funeralls*, of which Ritson mentions only an edition in 1604, and which Mr. Park confounds with *Greene's Memorial*, at the end of Gabriel Harvey's *Four Letters*, etc., 1592. The initials 'R. B., Gent.', are on the title-page, which Ritson supposes to mean Richard Barnefield; but *Greene's Funeralls* is certainly unworthy of Barnefield's pen. R. B. was a most devoted admirer of Greene, as the following lines will show:—

'For Judgement Jove, for learning deepe he still Apollo seemde;
For floent tongue, for eloquence, men Mercury him deemde;
For curtesie suppose him Guy, or Guyons somewhat lesse.
His life and manners, though I would, I cannot halfe expresse:
Nor mouth, nor mind, nor Muse can halfe declare,
His life, his love, his laude, so excellent they were.'

It seems strange that R. B. should touch upon Greene's 'life and manners', if he deserved the character for vice and profligacy which his enemy, Gabriel Harvey, gave of him, after Greene was dead and could not reply. The only known copy of *Greene's Funeralls*, 1594, is among Bishop Tanner's books at Oxford.

a comparatively easy rate.¹ He was of Clare-hall, Cambridge, from whence he dates the dedication of his *Mamillia*,² and he probably entered the Church: in 1584 we find a person of the name of Robert Greene in possession of the Vicarage of Tollesbury in Essex, and in that year he printed an enlargement and moralisation upon the story of Susanna and the Elders, under the title of *The Mirror of Modesty*.³ In 1585,

¹ Professor Tieck, in the Preface to his *Shakespeare's Vorschule*, says that Greene had 'a happy talent, a clear spirit, and a lively imagination', which, he adds, 'characterise all his writings'. We can by no means concur in this praise to its full extent, for although some of Greene's productions do display what we should rather term a lively fancy than 'a lively imagination', there are others that possess no recommendation of any kind, and were put forth into the world to relieve temporary necessities. By these he certainly ought not to be judged, though they ought to be taken into the account with reference to the facility with which he wrote his best pieces, and the total needlessness of study and effort, which Tieck also attributes to him.

² The earliest edition of it bears date in 1583; and by some verses signed G. B., 'in praise of the author and his book', which are prefixed, it is clear that it was written, if not published, before Greene left college.

'Greene is the plant, Mamillia is the flowre,
Cambridge the plat where plant and flower growes.'

The Rev. A. Dyce, in his edition of *Greene's Works*, in 2 vols. 8vo, also gives the date of 1583 to the publication of the first part of Greene's *Mamillia*.—See vol. i, cviii. The second part of *Mamillia* was undoubtedly first printed in 1593; and we apprehend that there may be a mistake of a figure on the title of the *first part*. Greene would hardly write the second part of the same story nearly ten years after the appearance of the first part.

³ The following work, in Andrew Maunsell's *Catalogue*, 1595, is also, probably, to be attributed to Greene:—'*Exhortation and fruitful Admonition to vertuous Parentes, and modest Matrones, to the bringing up of their Children in godly education and household discipline*. By R. G. Printed for Nich. Linge, 1584, in 8vo.' It has never been hitherto mentioned in any list of Greene's productions.

for some unassigned reason, he lost his preferment, but not until, consistently with his clerical character, he had published 'a Translation of a Sermon by Pope Gregory 13th.' The printing of his *Morando, the Tritameron of Love* in 1584, might have some connection with his loss of the Vicarage of Tollesbury. Greene then came to London, where he probably supported himself by his flowing pen, and in 1587 he was joined in the capital by his friend Thomas Nash. Greene was by birth a Norfolk man,¹ and Nash of Suffolk; and although the latter was younger than the former, they had possibly first become acquainted at Cambridge, which university Nash quitted in 1587. We may conclude that Greene's *Menaphon*, printed in 1587, and to which Nash wrote an introductory

¹ While Thomas Lodge was on a voyage with Cavendish, Greene published *Eupheus Shadow, the Battaile of the Sences*, in 1592, professing that it was the work of his 'absent friend': the dedication is signed 'Rob. Greene, *Norfolciensis*'. It is a small tract of extraordinary rarity. If not in fact by Greene himself, it is a direct imitation of his style, both in prose (of which it mainly consists) and verse (of which three pieces, in rhyme, are interspersed). The following is the best specimen:--

' *The Epitaph of Eurimone.*

' Heere lies ingravde in prime of tender age,
Eurimone, too pearlesse in disdaine:
Whose proud contempt no reason might asswage,
Till love, to quite all wronged lovers paine,
Bereft her wits, when as her friend was gone,
Who now lyes tombed in this marble stone.

' Let Ladies learne her lewdnes to eschew,
And whilst they live in freedome of delight,
To take remorse, and lovers sorrowes rew,
For why contempt is answered with despight.
Remembering still this sentence sage and ould,
Who will not yonge, they may not when they would.'

Lodge was by no means above the imitation of Greene, and wrote a drama in concert with him, printed in 1594.

epistle, appeared early in that year, because in Greene's *Euphues, his Censure to Philautus*, of the same date, it is mentioned as already in print. Some lines by 'Thomas Brabine, Gent., in praise of the Author', prefixed to the *Menaphon*, are of importance, as we may infer from them, that prior to 1587 Greene had attempted dramatic poetry, and having failed to a certain extent, as was alleged, published *Menaphon* in order to show that he could do something better :—

'Come foorth you witts that vaunt the pompe of speach,
And strive to thunder from a *Stageman's* throate !
View *Menaphon*, a note beyond your reach,
Whose sight will make your drumming descant doate.
Players avaunt ! You know not to delight.
Welcome, sweet Shepheard, worth a Scholler's sight.'

It will be remarked that this writer, speaking of the verses pronounced by players, uses precisely the epithet which Nash employs in his prefatory epistle to *Menaphon* ; Brabine talks of a 'drumming descant', and Nash of a 'drumming decasyllabon', both meaning the blank-verse which, we apprehend, Marlow had just rendered acceptable to popular audiences.

Of Greene's numerous tracts two have obtained extraordinary distinction.¹ Upon one of them, *Pandosto, the Triumph*

¹ There is a remarkable circumstance connected with one of his prose pamphlets that has never been mentioned—viz., that his *Quip for an Upstart Courtier, or a Dispute between Velvet-breeches and Cloth-breeches*, printed in 1592, is, in a great degree, a plagiarism from an old poem under the following title :—'*The Debate betweene Pride and Lowlines pleaded to an issue in Assize* ; and howe a Jurie, with great indifferencie being impannelled and redy to have geven their verdict, were straungely intercepted : no less pleasant then profitable. F. T., etc. Seene and allowed. Imprinted at London, by John Charlwood, for Rafe Newbery, dwelling in Fleetestrete a litle above the Condite.' It has no date, but

of Time, 1588, Shakespeare founded his *Winter's Tale*; and the other, *A Groatsworth of Wit*, 1592, contains the earliest notice of our great dramatic poet, whom Greene (consistently

it was probably not published after the year 1580. F. T. are no doubt the initials of the author, Francis Thyrne, who states himself to have been a lawyer, and his correct and frequent application of law terms proves that he was so. The dispute between Velvet-breeches and Cloth-breeches is conducted precisely as in Greene's tract, the conclusion only being different: Greene proceeds to the delivery of the verdict, but in the poem, which was his original in other respects, the trial is interrupted by the arrival of men armed with swords and bucklers, the adherents of Velvet-breeches, who cut Cloth-breeches to pieces. The following is F. T.'s description of Velvet-breeches, a line in which will establish Greene's obligation:—

'I did perceive then what it was in deede,
That is to weete, a goodly velvet breech,
Which in its furniture dyd so exceede,
As hardly shall ye finde it yf ye seech.

'For it was all of velvet very fine,
The neather stockes of pure Granado silke;
Such as came never upon legges of myne:
Their cooler cleane contrary unto milke.

'This breech was paned in the fayrest wyse,
And with right satten very costly lyned;
Embroidered according to the guise,
With golden lace full craftely engined.'

Greene, describing Velvet-breeches, says of him, '*the nether stocke was of the purest Granado silke*', which identifies the two works. The entrance of Cloth-breeches, as described in the poem, affords another proof to the same effect—

'There came another paire, *but softer pase*
And never ceased rolling, tyll they came
Into the dale and there had taken place:
Now listen, for me thought this litle game.

with the envious spirit he displayed towards Marlow in 1588) calls 'the only *Shake-scene* in a country'.

Our business with Greene is as an author of plays, and it may be taken for granted that he had assumed that character before 1587. As a writer of novels and pamphlets, he is full

'These breeches I did bound on eyther side,
As one that was in middle them betweene :
These last were but of cloth, withouten pride,
And stitche ne gard upon them was to seene.

'Of cloth (I say) both upper stocke and neather,
Paned and single lyned next the thie ;
Light for the were, meete for all sorte of weather.
Now, peradventure, you wyl thinke I lye.'

Greene, speaking of the gait of Cloth-breeches, tells us that he walked '*a softer pace*'. Greene's tract is reprinted in *The Harleian Miscellany* (Park's edition, vol. v); and it will be seen that in the prefatory matter he makes no acknowledgment that he had been at all indebted to any other work. Thynne's poem is of the greatest possible rarity, and we never heard of any other copy than that at Bridgewater House, which has escaped all notice by our poetical antiquaries. We cannot, therefore, refrain from giving one or two more brief quotations from it. The following is the description of one of the persons summoned upon the jury:—

'One of them had a fiddle in his hand,
And pleasant songes he played thereupon,
To[o] queynt and hard for me to understand :
If he were brave I make no question ;

'Or yf his furniture were for the daunce :
His breeches great, full of ventositie,
Devised in the castle of playsaunce,
And master of a daunsing schoole was he.'

F. T. and Greene both describe what they saw as if it were a dream (*sweven* is the older word used by F. T.), and, waking suddenly, both determine to write down their vision. F. T. claims that his narrative will be better than many works of the time, among them *Amadis de Gaul* and *The Palace of Pleasure*:—

[Better

of affectation, but generally elegant, and sometimes eloquent: it is a misfortune which runs through his works, that he often imitates the popular but puerile allusions of Lily. His invention is poor, from the want of a vigorous imagination, but his fancy is generally lively and graceful. In facility of expression, and in the flow of his blank-verse, he is not to be placed below his contemporary Peele. His usual fault (more discoverable in his plays than in his poems) is an absence of simplicity; but his pedantic classical references, frequently without either taste or discretion, he had in common with the other scribbling scholars of the time. It was Shakespeare's good fortune to be in a great degree without the knowledge, and therefore, if on no other account, without the defect. In one respect Greene may be said to have the advantage of Peele: he sometimes contrives to introduce a little more variety into the rhythm of his blank-verse, although it will still be found in most instances to run with fatiguing similarity. Greene wrote five plays (besides that in conjunction with Thomas Lodge), all of which it will be necessary to notice with more or less brevity, taking

'Better, I wys, then *Amadis de Gaule*,
Or els the Pallas forced with pleasure;
Who, though they promise honny, yelden gale,
And unto coales do turne their fained treasure;
'Or ballads that entreate of nought but love,
Of plaints, unkindnesse, and of gelosie,
Which are of wonderfull effectes to move
Young people's mindes, that reade them, to folly.
'Of whiche, neverthelesse, we dayly see
How many and how coonning are the Clarkes:
I bidde ye not herein to credite me;
Beleeve their writings and their noble warkes.'

A religious turn is given to the poem in many places, and it ends with 'a prayer to almightie God'. It is in small 8vo, and has been printed entire by the Shakespeare Society.

them in the order in which we may conjecture they came from his pen.

The History of Orlando Furioso, one of the Twelve Peers of France, was not printed until 1594,¹ but if not the first, it was one of Greene's earliest dramatic productions. Although Charlemaine (in the shape in which the piece has reached us) does not form one of the characters in it, yet as many of his Paladins are important personages, it is not improbable that this is the piece to which Peele alluded in 1589, when he mentioned it with other plays upon the stories of Mahomet, Tamerlaine, and Stukeley.¹ Henslowe notices it under date of February 21, 1591. The general tameness, sameness, and lameness, of the blank-verse render it not unlikely that this was the very play to which Greene referred in 1588, when he said that it had been charged against him that he could not make his 'verses jet upon the stage in tragical buskins'.

As far only as regards the madness of Orlando, arising out of the loves of Angelica and Medoro, the piece may be said to be founded upon Ariosto's romance, for in the end of the play, Orlando and Angelica are happily united: all the other scenes appear to have been of Greene's invention, and much was inserted for the sake merely of gratifying the multitude. Our poet's object seems to have been to compound a drama, which

¹ Again in 1599; but Greene's name not being on the title-page, it is ascertained to have been his work by the following passage in *The Defence of Coneycatching*, 1592: 'Master R[obert] G[reene] would it not make you blush—if you sold *Orlando Furioso* to the Queen's players for 20 nobles, and when they were in the country sold the same play to Lord Admirall's men for as much more?'

² 'Bid theatres and proud tragedians,
Bid Mahomet's Poo! and mighty Tamburlaine,
King Charlemaine, Tom Stukely, and the rest,
Adieu.'

See *Peele's Works*, by Rev. A. Dyce, second edition, ii, 170.

should exhibit an unusual variety of characters in the dresses of Europeans, Asiatics, and Africans, and to mix them up with as much rivalry, love, jealousy, and fighting as could be brought within the compass of five acts. How far *Orlando Furioso* was printed according to the author's copy, we have no means of deciding ; but it has evidently come down to us in a very imperfect state.

The opening consists of declarations of love for Angelica (who is made, by Greene, the daughter of 'Marsillus Emperour of Africa') by Sacripant (the Soldan), Rodamont, Mandricard (Prince of Cuba and of Mexico), Brandimart and Orlando. With the consent of her father she prefers Orlando, and the rest vow vengeance. After some fighting, in which Orlando besieges the castle of Rodamont and drives him and Brandimart before him, Sacripant contrives a scheme to make Orlando jealous of Angelica : he hangs roundelays on the trees, by which it is made to appear that Angelica and Medoro are mutually attached. Orlando enters, and before he sees the rhymes, delivers some lines, which are certainly among the best in the whole performance, elegant in thought, and not deficient in beauty of expression. He is addressing the evening star :—

‘ Fair Queen of love, thou mistress of delight,
Thou gladsome lamp that wait'st on Phœbe's train,
Spreading thy kindness through the jarring orbs,
That in their union praise thy lasting powers ;
Thou that hast stay'd the fiery Phlegon's course,
And mad'st the coachman of the glorious wain
To droop in view of Daphne's excellence ;
Fair pride of morn, sweet beauty of the even,
Look on Orlando languishing in love.
Sweet solitary groves, whereas the nymphs
With pleasance laugh to see the Satires play,

Witness Orlando's faith unto his love.
Tread she these lawns?—kind Flora, boast thy pride :
Seek she for shades?—spread, cedars, for her sake.
Fair Flora, make her couch amidst thy flowers.
Sweet crystal springs,
Wash ye with roses when she longs to drink.
Ah thought, my heaven! Ah heaven, that knows my thought!
Smile, joy in her that my content hath wrought.¹

The introductory passage, in which the star of Venus is invoked as the cause of the harmony of the spheres, is gracefully fancied. One line is incomplete, possibly left so purposely by the author, for the sake of relieving the ear, burdened with the recurrence of the same cadences. Orlando sees the roundelays upon the trees, goes mad, and then follows a medley of nonsense and folly, meant for the indications of insanity. The hero, as in *Ariosto*, drives all before him with the leg of a slain shepherd, and, 'attired like a madman', exclaims :—

'Woods, trees, leaves, leaves, trees, woods: *tria sequunter tria*.
Ho! Minerva, *salve*. Good morrow, how do you to-day? Tell me, sweet goddess, will Jove send Mercury to Calypso to let me go? Will he? Why then, he's a gentleman every hair o' the head on him.'

Afterwards he comes in like a poet (mad of course), and discharges a quantity of incoherent balderdash. He subsequently breaks a fiddler's head with his own instrument, and has an interview with Ariosto's enchantress, Melissa, who gives him a draught, which restores him to his senses: then, in the habit of a common soldier, he fights with Oliver, Ogier, and the rest of the Paladins, as the champion of Angelica, whose truth he maintains. After he has overcome her slanderers, he throws

¹ We have here and elsewhere usually followed the text as furnished by the Rev. A. Dyce, in his edition of *Greene's Works*, 8vo, 1831.

off his disguise, and is united to her by Marsillus : in order to carry her in triumph to France, he says—

‘ We ’ll richly rig up all our fleet,
More brave than was that gallant Grecian keel
That brought away the Colchian fleece of gold.
Our sails of sendal spread into the wind,
Our ropes and tacklings, all of finest silk,
Fetch’d from the native looms of labouring worms,
The pride of Barbary, and the glorious wealth
That is transported by the western bounds :
Our stems cut out of gleaming ivory,
Our planks and sides fram’d out of cypress wood,
That bears the name of Cyparissus’ change,
To burst the billows of the ocean sea,
Where Phœbus dips his amber tresses oft,
And kisses Thetis in the day’s decline.’

These highly wrought and gorgeously coloured descriptions passed with Greene and his contemporaries for vastly more than they are worth ; and in another of his plays (to which we shall next advert) he has a long speech of much the same import, where he talks of frigates—

‘ Stemm’d and incas’d with burnished ivory,
And overlaid with plates of Persian wealth.’

It is not difficult to accumulate splendid objects, and to decorate them with corresponding epithets ; but it is much harder to collect fine thoughts, and to clothe them in appropriate language. Greene was a considerable master of diction, but his ideas want novelty and originality.

His *Honourable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bongay*, first published in 1594, is entitled to a considerable share of approbation. Greene seems to have been incited to undertake this subject by Marlow’s *Faustus*, a drama to which, however,

it is much inferior both in design and execution. Friar Bacon and Friar Bongay are only conjurers: Faustus is a mighty necromancer who, by his great intellect and deep learning, bends the fates to his will, and makes hell, earth, and heaven, for a time, subservient to his purposes. Greene's work is reprinted in the last edition of *Dodsley's Old Plays*, as well as by the late Rev. Mr. Dyce, so that any lengthened examination of it is rendered unnecessary. It was performed, according to Henslowe, as early as February 19, 1591, and, doubtless, was not then by any means a new play, so that it may have been written in 1588 or 1589. The two friars are only incidentally concerned in the plot, which chiefly relates to the love of Edward I, when Prince of Wales, for a keeper's daughter, whom he courted, first in person, and afterwards by proxy, the proxy in the end supplanting his principal. There is also an underplot of two young scholars, who were in love with the same keeper's daughter, who fight and kill each other. The rest of the piece, which is full of variety, if not of interest, is made up of trials of skill between rival conjurers before Henry III, the Emperor of Germany, Elinor of Castille (whom Edward ultimately married), and a number of courtiers, together with some comic scenes, not without humour, in which Ralph Simnell, the king's fool, and Miles, the blundering pupil of Friar Bacon, are concerned. Just before the close (in imitation of some of the old *Morals*) Miles is carried off to hell on the back of one of Friar Bacon's devils.¹ Bacon ulti-

¹ This was, probably, one of the last instances in which the devil was brought upon the stage, *in propria personâ*, for the edification and delight of the multitude in London. In 1596, as Lodge tells us in his *Wits Miserie and the Worlds Madnesse*, written and published in that year, he had been banished to the country: 'They say likewise' (he observes) 'there is a Plaier Devil, a handsome sonne of Mammons, but yet I have not seene him, *because he skulks in the country*: if I chance to meet him against the next impression, he shall shift very cunningly but Ile pleasantlie conjure him.'

mately renounces his magic art, and delivers a prophesy regarding Elizabeth, which may be quoted as a proof that Greene had at this time much improved his versification—

‘ I find by deep prescience of mine art,
Which once I temper’d in my secret cell,
That here, where Brute did build his Troynovant,
From forth the royal garden of a king
Shall flourish out so rich and fair a bud,
Whose brightness shall deface proud Phœbus’ flower,
And overshadow Albion with her leaves.
Till then Mars shall be master of the field,
But then the stormy threats of war shall cease :
The horse shall stamp as careless of the pike,
Drums shall be turn’d to timbrels of delight ;
With wealthy favours plenty shall enrich
The strand that gladdened wandering Brute to see,
And peace from heaven shall harbour in these leaves
That gorgeous beautify this matchless flower.
Apollo’s heliotropion then shall stoop,
And Venus’ hyacinth shall vail her top ;
Juno shall shut her gilliflowers up,
And Pallas’ bay shall ’bash her brightest green ;
Ceres’ carnation, in consort with those,
Shall stoop and wonder at Diana’s rose.’

It is to be remarked, however, that in this piece we meet with occasional alexandrines, and with the not unfrequent insertion of redundant syllables.

Greene’s *Scottish History of James the Fourth slain at Flodden*, 1598, has many jingling lines interspersed in the blank-verse, as if at the time he wrote it the author felt the truth of the opinion, that he was unequal to produce good blank-verse, or, at all events, as if he were himself better satisfied with rhyme. The story is rather a romantic fiction

than a dramatised portion of history; and the words, 'slain at Flodden', are introduced upon the title-page as if only to identify the king intended; for the incidents do not descend as low as that memorable event. It is a singular circumstance, that the king of England, who forms one of the characters in this play, is called *Arius*, as if Greene at the time he wrote had some scruple in naming Henry VIII, on account of the danger of giving offence to the Queen and court. The title-page states that the history is 'intermixed with a pleasant comedy presented by Oboram, King of Fairies': in the body of the performance he is called Aster Oberon, and he is the same person (far differently drawn) who figures in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. The 'pleasant comedy' which he presents in *James the Fourth* consists only of dances by antics and fairies between the acts. The 'history' is supposed to be represented by a company of players before Oberon, at the instance of Bohan, 'a Stoic', who lives in a tomb and talks broad Scotch: he has two sons, called Slipper and Nano, who are made by the Fairy King to take the parts of a clown and a dwarf.

The plot is shortly this:—James IV falling in love with Ida, the daughter of the Countess of Arrain, puts away his Queen Dorothea in hopes to obtain her; after which the King is forsaken by Douglas and other peers, who rebel against his tyranny. Queen Dorothea, though compelled to fly from the court in male attire, persuades them to return to their allegiance. An attempt is subsequently made to assassinate Dorothea, who is left for dead; but she is not killed, and is ultimately restored to her throne and repentant husband. A main, though not very natural cause of the remorse of James IV is his inability to compass his purpose with Ida, who at the conclusion is married to a young nobleman named Eustace, with whom she had fallen suddenly in love. The

following dialogue between the Countess of Arrain and her daughter, and a good deal that succeeds it, is in rhyme—

Countess.—Fair Ida, might you chuse the greatest good
Midst all the world in blessings that abound,
Wherein, my daughter, should your liking be?

Ida.—Not in delights or pomp or majesty.

Countess.—And why?

Ida.—Since these are means to draw the mind
From perfect good; and make true judgment blind.

Countess.—Might you have wealth and fortune's richest store?

Ida.—Yet would I (might I chuse) be honest poor;
For she that sits at fortune's feet alow,
Is sure she shall not taste a farther woe;
But those that prank on top of fortune's ball,
Still feare a change, and fearing catch a fall.

Countess.—Tut, foolish maid! each one contemneth need.

Ida.—Good reason why—they know not good indeed.

Countess.—Many, marry then, on whom distress doth lour.

Ida.—Yes, they that virtue deem an honest dower.
Madam, by right this world I may compare
Unto my work, wherein with heedful care
The heavenly workman plants with curious hand,
As I with needle draw each thing on land,
Even as he list. Some men like to the rose
Are fashioned fresh, some in their stalks do close,
And born do sudden die: some are but weeds,
And yet from them a secret good proceeds.
I with my needle, if I please, may blot
The fairest rose within my cambric plot:
God with a beck can change each worldly thing,
The poor to earth, the beggar to the king.
What then hath man wherein he well may boast,
Since by a beck he lives, a lour is lost?

The resemblance is prettily made out, and the moral deli-

cately worded: the line 'And yet from them a secret good proceeds', reminds one of Shakespeare's 'There is some soul of goodness in things evil'. In act ii, Ateukin, the King's parasite and favourite, is sent to court Ida on behalf of his sovereign, and this scene is conducted in blank-verse, with the exception of occasional couplets.

Ateukin.—Fair, comely nymph, the beauty of your face,
Sufficient to bewitch the heavenly powers,
Hath wrought so much in him, that now of late
He finds himself made captive unto love;
And though his power and majesty require
A straight command before an humble suit,
Yet he his mightiness doth so abase
As to intreat your favour, honest maid.

Ida.—Is he not married, Sir, unto our Queen?

Ateukin.—He is.

Ida.—And are not they by God accurst
That sever those whom he hath knit in one?

Ateukin.—They be: what then? we seek not to displace
The Princess from her seat; but since by love
The King is made your own, he is resolved¹
In private to accept your dalliance,
In spite of war, [of] watch, or worldly eye.

Ida.—Oh, how he talks, as if he should not die!
As if that God in justice once could wink
Upon that fault I am ashamed to think.

Here we see an instance how Greene appears to rise and improve with his rhyme, and the blank-verse is more varied than usual with him.

In act iv, there is a scene between the King and his parasite Ateukin, in which the latter, after the supposed assassination of Dorothea, incites the former to persevere against Ida: the King at last exclaims:—

¹ The old copy reads '*she* is resolv'd', which is certainly wrong.

'Enough ! I am confirm'd. Ateukin, come,
 Rid me of love, and rid me of my grief.
 Drive thou the tyrant from this tainted breast,
 Then may I triumph in the height of joy.
 Go to mine Ida : tell her, that I vow
 To raise her head and make her honours great.
 Go to mine Ida : tell her, that her hairs
 Shall be embellished with orient pearls ;
 And crowns of sapphires, compassing her browes,
 Shall war with those sweet beauties of her eyes.
 Go to mine Ida : tell her, that my soul
 Shall keep her semblance closed in my breast,
 And I, in touching of her milk-white mould,
 Will think me deified in such a grace.'

These lines, it will be acknowledged, are better than any others of the same kind we have yet seen by Greene : they have more passion, and the language is not ill adapted to express it.

From the obvious improvement of the style, its greater ease and diversity, we may conclude that *George-a-Green the Pinner of Wakefield*, 1599, was written by Greene not long before his death : it is a lively story, cheerfully told, and was certainly popular : it includes among its characters, the Kings of England and Scotland, and their nobility, together with Robin Hood and his 'merry men'. George-a-Green, the hero, in various ways gets the better of all of them, no doubt to the great satisfaction of the kind of audiences before whom the 'pleasant conceited comedy' was performed. We do not enter into the plot, because the piece has been often reprinted : it has only been ascertained to be the work of Greene within the last few years, when a copy came to light, on the title-page of which, in a hand-writing of the time and upon the testimony of Juby, the well-known actor, it was asserted to be by Robert Greene.¹

¹ In the same hand-writing it is registered, that *The Pinner of Wake-*

In the comic scenes, among the inferior characters, a good deal of the dialogue is in prose, although printed in disjointed lines ; and in the blank-verse there is not only more ease and lightness, but generally more vigour and variety. Here too we find, what has rarely occurred in Greene's previous productions, a number of trochees at the ends of the lines, which gives them additional vivacity : one short quotation will contain evidence of different improvements in style ; it is from a scene, near the close, between the Kings of England and Scotland, George-a-Green, Robin Hood, and all the principal characters, who are brought together upon the stage. King Edward tells George to rise, to which he answers,

'Nay, good my liege, ill-nurtur'd we were then :
Though we Yorkshire men be blunt of speech,
And little skill'd in court or such quaint fashions,
Yet nature teacheth us duty to our king ;
Therefore, I

Humbly beseech you, pardon George-a-Green.

Robin-hood.—And, good my lord, a pardon for poor Robin ;
And for us all a pardon, good king Edward.

Shoemaker.—I pray you a pardon for the Shoemakers.

Edward.—I frankly grant a pardon to you all ;
And, George-a-Green, give me thy hand : there is
None in England that shall do thee wrong.
Even from my court I came to see thyself,
And now I see that fame speaks nought but truth.

George.—I humbly thank your royal majesty.
That which I did against the Earl of Kendall,
Was¹ but a subject's duty to his sovereign,
And therefore little merits such good words.'

field was written by 'a Minister', and W. Shakespeare is mentioned as the witness to the fact. Greene, as we know, had been in the church, and probably he was the person meant, though a blank was left for the name.—See Dyce's *Greene's Works*, i, 5.

¹ The old copy, and Dyce following it, read 'It was', etc., but *it* is re-

The commencement of the piece contains an allusion to Marlow's *Tamburlaine the Great*, which of course maintained its popularity when *The Pinner of Wakefield* was written.

One of the rarest of Greene's plays is called on the title-page, *The comical History of Alphonsus, King of Arragon*, printed in 1599, and it is in many respects a singular performance: like *The Pinner of Wakefield*, it also mentions 'the mighty Tamburlaine', who had become a common example of enterprise and bravery, and whose martial achievements Greene seems to have here imitated. It contains the story of Carinus, King of Arragon (which the author places in Italy), and his son Alphonsus, who had been driven from their rightful possessions by a usurper named Flaminus. In the opening of the piece we find the old king and the young prince in exile: the latter soon afterwards, as a common soldier, enters the army of Belinus, King of Naples, who was then defending his territory against the invasion of Flaminus. Belinus promises Alphonsus that he shall possess whatever his sword conquers, and in the first battle he kills the usurper, and claims the kingdom of Arragon, which Belinus, as by contract bound, bestows upon him. Thus seated on the throne of Arragon, Alphonsus demands the submission of Belinus, his benefactor, as a vassal; and the latter, not submitting, is warred upon and subdued, together with his ally, the Duke of Milan. Alphonsus gives away the kingdom of Naples, the dukedom of Milan, and even his own crown of Arragon to three of his chief followers, determining himself to attack Amurack, the Sultan of Turkey (to whom Belinus had fled), and to seat himself on the throne of the Mahometan empire. He succeeds; and finally marries Iphigina, the daughter of Amurack, who is content, after a

dundant in sense and metre. We have also ventured to regulate the lines somewhat differently than he has given them: the word 'England' is to be pronounced as a trisyllable.

long and vain struggle, to yield the sovereignty to his Christian son-in-law.

These are the main incidents, and from the first act to the last (for it is regularly divided into acts, though the scenes are not marked), it is full of bustle and battle—Christians of various kingdoms, Turks and Amazons (for an army of female warriors is brought into the field on behalf of Amurack), fill the stage ; and independent of any interest for the principal characters, which is inconsiderable, it must have been a striking spectacle. Medea is also introduced to work enchantments, and, at the instigation of Fausta, the wife of Amurack, she raises Homer's Calchas, and makes him prophesy as to the result of the contest between Alphonsus and Amurack.

The blank-verse has little force or variety, though sufficiently easy and flowing, and Greene has here rarely assisted himself by the insertion of rhyming couplets. The following is the prologue of Venus, who, lamenting the deficiency of poets, undertakes to write the piece herself ; and for this purpose, after she has delivered her prologue, departs with Calliope and the rest of the Muses (who had entered playing upon instruments) to Parnassus—

' Poets are scarce, when Goddesses themselves
Are forced to leave their high and stately seats,
Placed on the top of high Olympus mount,
To seeke them out to pen their champions praise.
The time hath been when Homer's sugar'd muse
Did make each echo to repeate his verse,
That every coward that durst crack a spear
And tilt and turney for his lady's sake,
Was painted out in colours of such price
As might become the proudest potentate :
But now-a-days, so irksome idless' slights,
And cursed charms have witch'd each student's mind,

That death it is to any of them all,
If that their hands to penning you do call.
Oh Virgil, Virgil ! wert thou now alive,
Whose painful pen in stout Augustus' days
Did 'dain to let the base and silly fly
To scape away without thy praise of her,
I do not doubt but long or ere this time,
Alphonsus' fame unto the heavens should climb ;
Alphonsus' fame, that man of Jove his seed,
Sprung from the loins of the immortal Gods,
Whose sire, although he habit on the earth,
May claim a portion in the fiery pole
As well as any one, whate'er he be.
But setting by Alphonsus' power divine,
What man alive, or now amongst the ghosts,
Could countervail his courage and his strength ?
But thou art dead, yea, Virgil, thou art gone,
And all his acts drown'd in oblivion.
No, Venus, no ; though poets prove unkind,
And loth to stand in penning of his deeds,
Yet rather than they shall be clean forgot,
I, which was wont to follow Cupid's games,
Will put in ure Minerva's sacred art ;
And this my hand, which used for to pen
The praise of love and Cupid's peerless power,
Will now begin to treat of bloody Mars,
Of doughty deeds and valiant victories.'

The choruses Venus delivers between the acts are sometimes necessary to the due understanding of the plot, which proceeds with great rapidity, the action changing suddenly from Italy to Turkey, and from Turkey again to Italy.

The scene of enchantment, in which Medea raises Calchas, presents nothing so remarkable as the curious fact that the

Greek seer was dressed 'in a white surplice and a cardinal's mitre'. The enchantress thus invokes him—

'Thou which were wont in Agamemnon's days
To utter forth Apollo's oracles
At sacred Delphos, Calchas I do mean,
I charge thee come, all lingering set aside,
Unless the penance you thereof abide.
I conjure thee, by Pluto's loathsome lake,
By all the hags which harbour in the same,
By stinking Styx, and filthy Phlegethon,
To come with speed, and truly to fulfil
That which Medea straight to thee shall will.'

Throughout there is the usual abundance of classical allusion without propriety, as in the following instance, where Amuracke is made, in the true Turkish spirit of the time, to threaten Mahomet himself, for having disappointed him :

'Oh, Dædalus, and wert thou now alive,
To fasten wings upon high Amuracke,
Mahound should know, and that for certainty,
That Turkish kings can brook no injury.'

It is evident, from the last lines put into the mouth of Venus in the Epilogue, that Greene meant to write a second part to this performance ; but whether he was deterred by its want of popularity, or prevented by the suddenness of his death, must be matter of mere speculation. The goddess thus addresses the Muses, from whom she was about to depart for Olympus.

'Mean time, dear Muses, wander you not far
Forth of the path of high Parnassus' hill ;
That when I come to finish up his life,
You may be ready for to succour me.
Adieu, dear dames ; farewell, Calliope.'

Possibly the continuation has perished. On the whole we are

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led to suspect that *Alphonsus*, if by Greene, was one of his earliest productions.

In *The Looking-Glass for London and England*, 1594, Greene had a coadjutor in the celebrated Thomas Lodge; and we shall speak of that production when we remark upon the separate performances of the latter.

END OF VOL. II.

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